



Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan August 2017

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Acknowledgements

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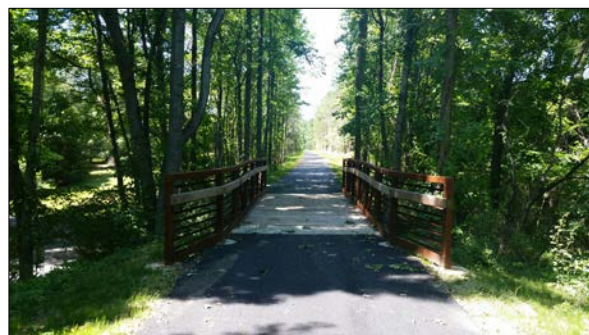
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I. Executive Summary

A. Purpose of this Plan

St. Mary's County public parks, recreation, and open space assets are critical pieces of public infrastructure that define the rural, coastal character of the peninsula and contribute to the high quality of life of residents. These resources preserve and celebrate the County's rich natural and cultural resources and provide opportunities for local engagement in healthy, active, and interesting activities that are known to increase public health and personal well-being and support the local economy. The update of the St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan serves two significant functions:

1. This Plan provides current information and establishes goals and recommendations to guide St. Mary's County in providing, improving, and best leveraging its system of public parks, recreation services, and open space amenities to meet the growing needs and desires of residents and visitors.
2. County update and adoption of this Plan on a five-year cycle fulfills the planning requirement of Maryland's Program Open Space Localside Program (per *Section 5-905[b][2] of the Natural Resources Article – Annotated Code of Maryland*). The County relies on annual Localside funding for park land acquisition and capital improvements. The Plan was last updated in 2012, and final review and approval of this update is anticipated in 2017.



Three Notch Trail

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

B. Planning Process Summary

The planning process, led by the Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC, consisted of the following components:

- Strategic Kick Off
- Review of existing plans, data, and materials
- Studies of trends, demographics, and estimated local economic impacts of recreation
- Public, staff, and stakeholder engagement
- Open link (web based) survey
- GIS mapping and analysis
- Draft Plan preparation and review by County and State
- Final Plan review and approvals by County and State

Participation in the Planning Process

- Staff Engagement
- 5 Stakeholder Focus Groups
- 4 Public Meetings
- 1,400+ Survey Responses

C. Key Issues Summary

In planning to meet existing and future public demand on the County's system of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces, and to best ensure County's ability to utilize Program Open Space funding as effectively as possible to meet goals identified in this Plan, the following two issues were identified as of critical significance.

Maintain and Grow Public Recreation and Parks Opportunities throughout St. Mary's County

The continued, improved, and expanded provision of abundant and diverse opportunities for public participation in sports, recreation, fitness, culture, and leisure activities within the County is important to residents, stakeholders, and staff. The County's system of parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces generally met public needs; however, high demand for athletic fields, water access sites, trails, and pickleball courts occasionally outweighed the capacity of existing assets. Continued population growth, and anticipated increases in future visitor growth will increase usage and demand for facilities and services managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks. Substantial, sustained, and targeted investment in infrastructure, staff, and program resources is needed to best ensure public needs are met now and into the future.

Over 13,000 acres of public parks, natural areas, recreation facilities, and museums provide diverse recreation opportunities throughout St. Mary's County.

Continue Use of Program Open Space to Enhance Public Recreation Opportunities

St. Mary's County has utilized, and should continue to utilize, Program Open Space funds for regular improvements to County parks and recreation amenities, and strategic acquisition of land for future parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. Program Open Space recently supported the County's acquisition of the Shannon Farm, and Snow Hill Park Farm properties. With these two major



Snow Hill Park – July 2017 – limited public waterfront access opened.
Image Credit: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks

acquisitions, the County exceeded its acreage acquisition goal for parks and recreation. The development of public recreation amenities at these sites, including new public access to the Patuxent River, will depend on assistance from Program Open Space, and will significantly contribute to satisfying long-standing recreation and land conservation goals of the state and county.

D. Goals and Recommendations

Over the next five years and beyond, St. Mary's County should continue to target investments in new amenity development, and renovation of existing assets to improve its parks, recreation, museum, and open space system. To guide enhancement, the County should seek to:

- **Expand the inventory** of County managed athletic fields and sport courts, and enhance the condition of current fields and courts to ensure long-term playability and safe use.
- **Increase opportunities** for water access and waterfront recreation.
- **Create a network** of connected walkways, trails, and paths throughout the County.
- **Continue to operate, maintain, and improve** existing facilities and programs in an efficient and cost effective manner for the benefit of residents and visitors.

II. Introduction and Planning Context

A. Purpose of this Plan

Public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are key pieces of community infrastructure that influence the quality of life of residents in St. Mary's County. These resources preserve and celebrate the County's rich natural and cultural resources, and provide opportunities for local engagement in healthy, active, and interesting activities that are known to increase public health, personal well-being, and support the local economy.

This update of the St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan serves two significant functions. First, this Plan provides County and State agencies, and the public, with current information relevant to the provision of public parks, recreation services, and open space amenities, now and into the near future, in St. Mary's County.

Secondly, updating the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan on a five-year cycle is a prerequisite for County participation in Maryland's Program Open Space Localside Program (per *Section 5-905(b)(2) of the Natural Resources Article – Annotated Code of Maryland*). The Localside Program provides annual grant funds that directly support land acquisitions for conservation and recreation, and assist in funding facility improvements to the County's parks, recreation, and open space system. Every county in Maryland, and the City of Baltimore, participates in Program Open Space. St. Mary's County has participated in Program Open since the program's inception in 1969. Residents and visitors of St. Mary's County have greatly benefitted from the recreation, parks, and open space services and amenities that were made possible in part by Program Open Space. The County has used these funds on ten projects over the past six years, as summarized in **Table 1**.



Phase V Opening – Three Notch Trail

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Table 1: Program Open Space Statistics for St. Mary's County

	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	Total	Annual Average
Land Acquisition				\$311,883		\$1,000,000	\$1,311,883	\$218,647
Facility Improvements	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$185,000	\$125,000	\$280,000	\$143,500	\$908,500	\$151,417

Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan, and Other County and State Plans

Upon adoption by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, this updated Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan becomes part of the County's Comprehensive Plan by reference. The goals and recommendations of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan are supportive of the following County and State guiding plans and programs:



County:

2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Economic Development Study
Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan
St. Mary's County Transportation Plan

State:

Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
Maryland Program Open Space
GreenPrint
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Program



B. Planning Process and Public Engagement

Preparation of this update to the St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan was led by the County's Recreation and Parks Department and GreenPlay, LLC. County staff from the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, and the Agriculture and Seafood Division of the Department of Economic Development, were the primary authors of the Natural Resource Land Conservation and Agricultural Land Preservation sections of this Plan. Generally, the update of this Plan followed and incorporated the follow planning program:

1. Information Gathering and Data Review
2. Public, Stakeholder, and Staff Engagement
3. Analysis and Goal Setting
4. Draft Plan Preparation and County Review
5. State Draft Plan Review
6. Finalization and County Adoption of the Plan

Information Gathering and Review

The planning process began with a review of existing County and State plans, programs, and resources relevant to the provision of public parks, recreation, and open space in St. Mary's County. Current guiding documents, plans, and data sources considered during the update of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan included, but were not limited to:

- 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan
- County 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Study
- Draft Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan
- Lexington Park Development District Master Plan
- County Recreation and Parks Program Guides and Enrollment Data
- Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources – 2016 Annual Acreage Report
- Maryland Dept. of Planning – Census and Demographic Data
- Maryland Dept. of Planning – Protected Lands Reporting Site
- Maryland Dept. of Agriculture – MALPF Program

Staff, Stakeholder, and Public Participation

Information, ideas, and perceptions of the current parks, recreation, and open space assets managed by St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks Department were collected through staff and stakeholder interviews, five focus group meetings, and four public meetings. Additionally, an open link survey was hosted online for a period of two weeks in September 2016. The survey posed 17 questions regarding people's perception of the current parks, recreation, and open space assets in St. Mary's County, and received over 1,400 responses.

Summary of Staff Participation

County staff, including department heads, program staff, and the County Administrator, provided input on the update of this Plan. County departments and offices that participated in the planning process included the Recreation and Parks Department; Land Use and Growth Management; and Economic Development's Administration, Tourism, and Agriculture and Seafood Divisions.

Summary of Stakeholder Participation

Five stakeholder focus group meetings were held on September 1, 2016. For the purposes of this Plan, stakeholders were considered to be public and private organizations, institutions, and individuals with direct ties to, and interests in, the

County's system of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. Stakeholders invited to participate generally included representatives of sports programs and leagues that utilize, or would like to utilize, County fields; participants in, and providers of, outdoor recreation and natural resource based sports and leisure activities; museums, cultural, and historical amenity providers and preservationists; and those involved with indoor sports, recreation, and leisure activities. Of those invited, a total of 38 individuals participated, representing a variety of sports leagues, clubs, and groups, as well as museums, cultural interests, and land conservation groups. Some participated in more than one meeting.

Stakeholder Focus Group Topics

- *Outdoor Sports & Natural Resource Based Recreation*
- *League Sports*
- *Museums/Cultural & Historic Resources*
- *Indoor Sports, Recreation, & Leisure Activities*
- *Non-County Government Parks & Recreation*

Public Participation – Public Meetings

Members of the community were notified of the series of four public meetings, in which they were invited to participate, with County boards and commissions, as noted below, where the update of this Plan was on the agenda and was discussed. In addition to these public meetings, the draft plan was reviewed with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on January 10, 2017.

- September 1, 2016 – Recreation and Parks Citizen Advisory Board
- October 6, 2016 – Recreation and Parks Citizen Advisory Board
- November 2, 2016 – Recreation and Parks Citizen Advisory Board
- December 12, 2016 – Planning Commission
- January 10, 2017 – Commissioners of St. Mary's County
- August 22, 2017 – Commissioners of St. Mary's County

Public Participation – Open Link Survey

To allow for greater public participation in the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan update planning process, an online survey was administered by the Recreation and Parks Department. The survey was opened for a period of two weeks in September 2016. The survey consisted of 17 questions focused on gauging respondents' interest, usage, current barriers to use, perceptions of quality, and ideas for improving the current system of County-managed parks, recreation amenities, and cultural assets.

2016 Survey responses included:

- *"Just recently heard about the Three Notch Trail – loved it!"*
- *"Athletic fields need better surfaces and more parking."*
- *"We use St. Mary's County resources every weekend. Bathrooms at all parks would help."*

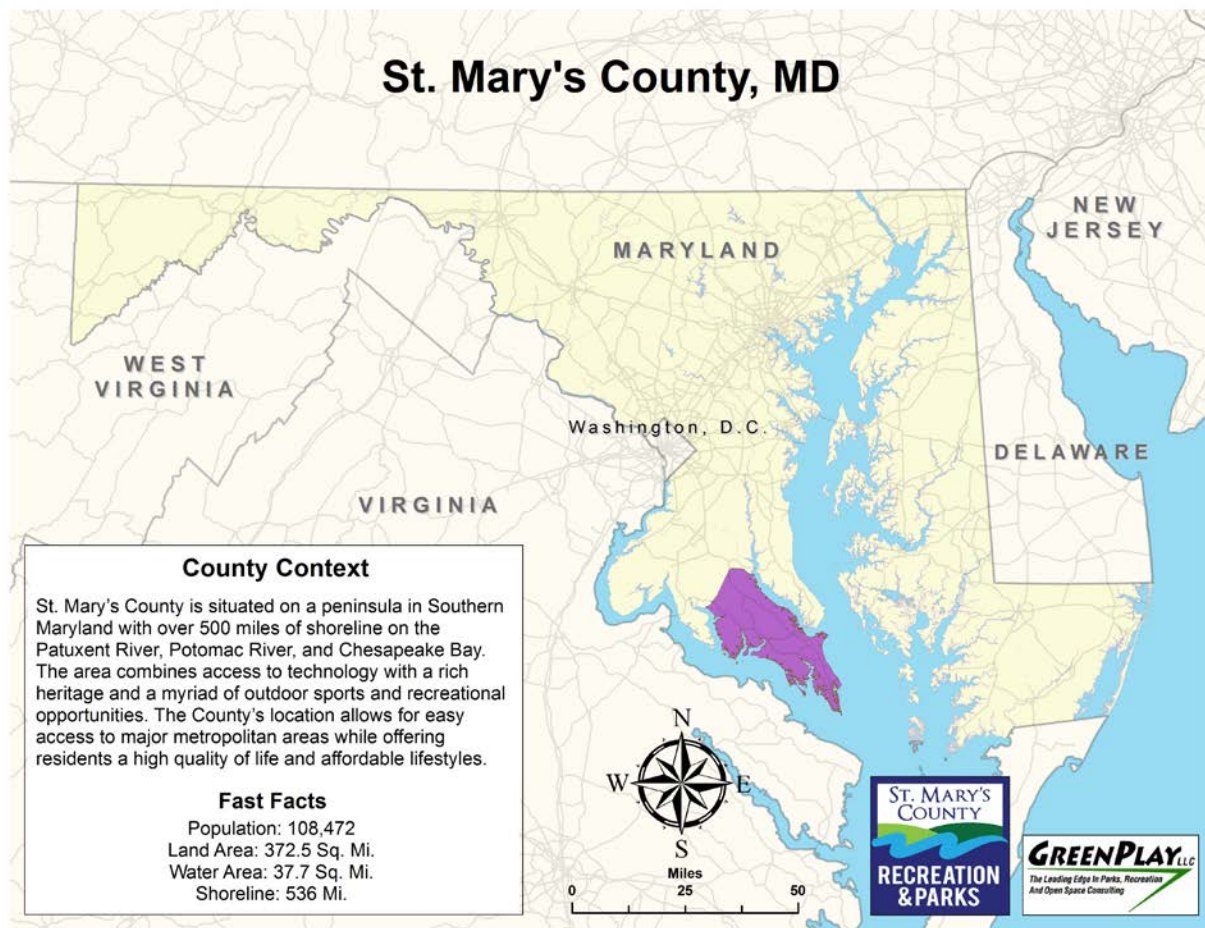
The survey received a total of 1,436 responses, which exceeded participation in the survey completed for the 2012 update of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan by approximately three-fold. General survey findings are noted in the "Key Findings and Issues" section below. A comprehensive report of the survey results has been retained as a staff resource by the Recreation and Parks Department, and is available for public review upon request. Key findings from staff, stakeholder, and public input processes are discussed in Section III-D, Level of Service Analysis, of this Plan.

C. County Character and Existing System of Public Open Space

Geographic Character

St. Mary's County is located at the southern terminus of the peninsula that forms southern Maryland. It is bordered by Charles County to the north and surrounded by water on all other sides, including the Potomac River to the west, the Patuxent River to the east, and the Chesapeake Bay to the south. The County seat of Leonardtown is located approximately 90 miles south of the City of Baltimore, 70 miles south of Annapolis and 60 miles south of Washington D.C. **Map 1** illustrates the general location of the County in the region.

Map 1: County Context



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC.

Since the County's establishment in 1637, residents have shared a close connection with St. Mary's 500+ miles of coastline and abundance of fertile, productive farmlands, woodlands, rivers, and wetlands. The earliest English settlers here founded the first colony in Maryland. The County is known as the birthplace of religious freedom in the nation, with St. Clement's Island being the site of the first known Catholic mass in the United States. Farming, fishing, and crabbing have been, and continue to be, important parts of the County's identity. However, the County has been experiencing growth in population for decades, along with shift in its economic base from agriculture and natural resources to the defense industry.

With this shift has come an increase in new residents that are likely to commute to nearby urban areas, including Washington D.C., for work.

Current Demographic Character – A Growing Population

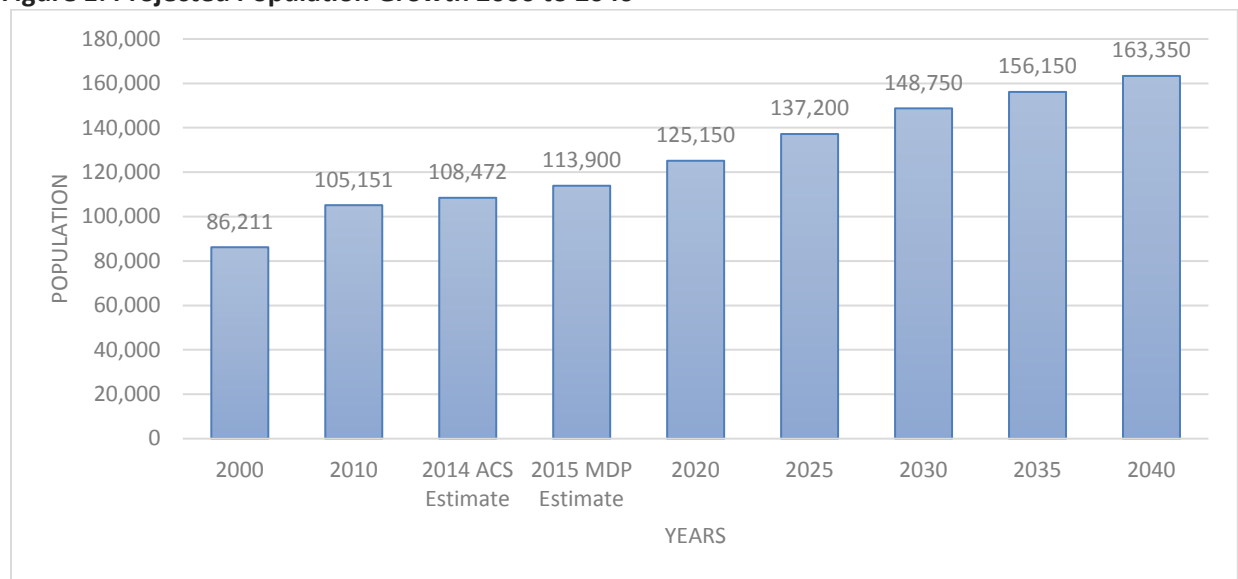
As noted in **Table 2** the County's population of over 100,000 was relatively young with a high average median household income. As illustrated in **Figure 1**, from 2000 to 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the County's population grew by 22%. Between 2015 and 2025, the population is projected to increase by 20%. The Maryland Department of Planning also projects that from 2015 to 2040 the County's population may increase by as much as 43%.

Table 2: 2014/2015 St. Mary's County General Demographic Profile

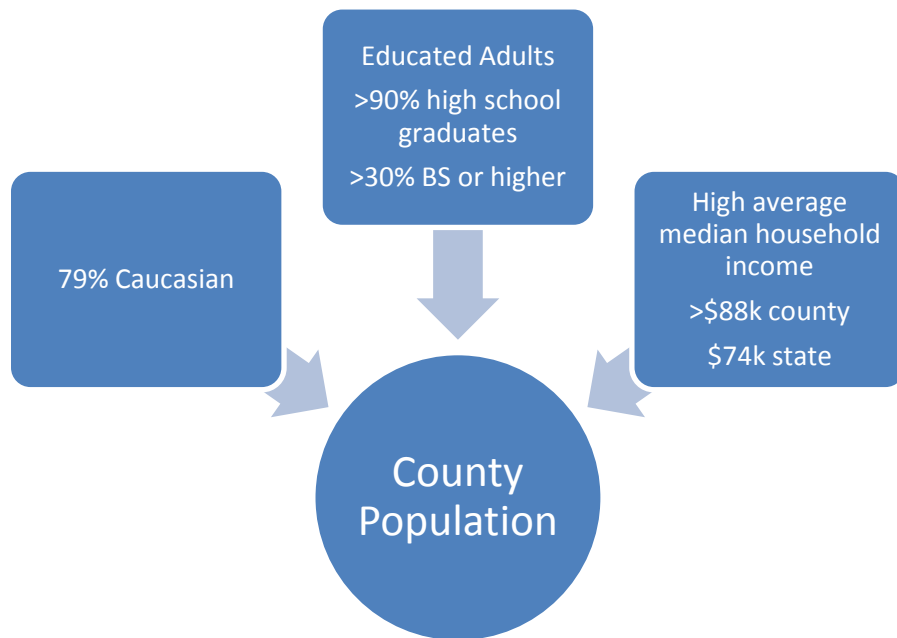
Population	108,472
Median Age	36.1
Households	37,947
Median Household Income	\$88,190

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Figure 1: Projected Population Growth 2000 to 2040



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and U.S. Census Bureau

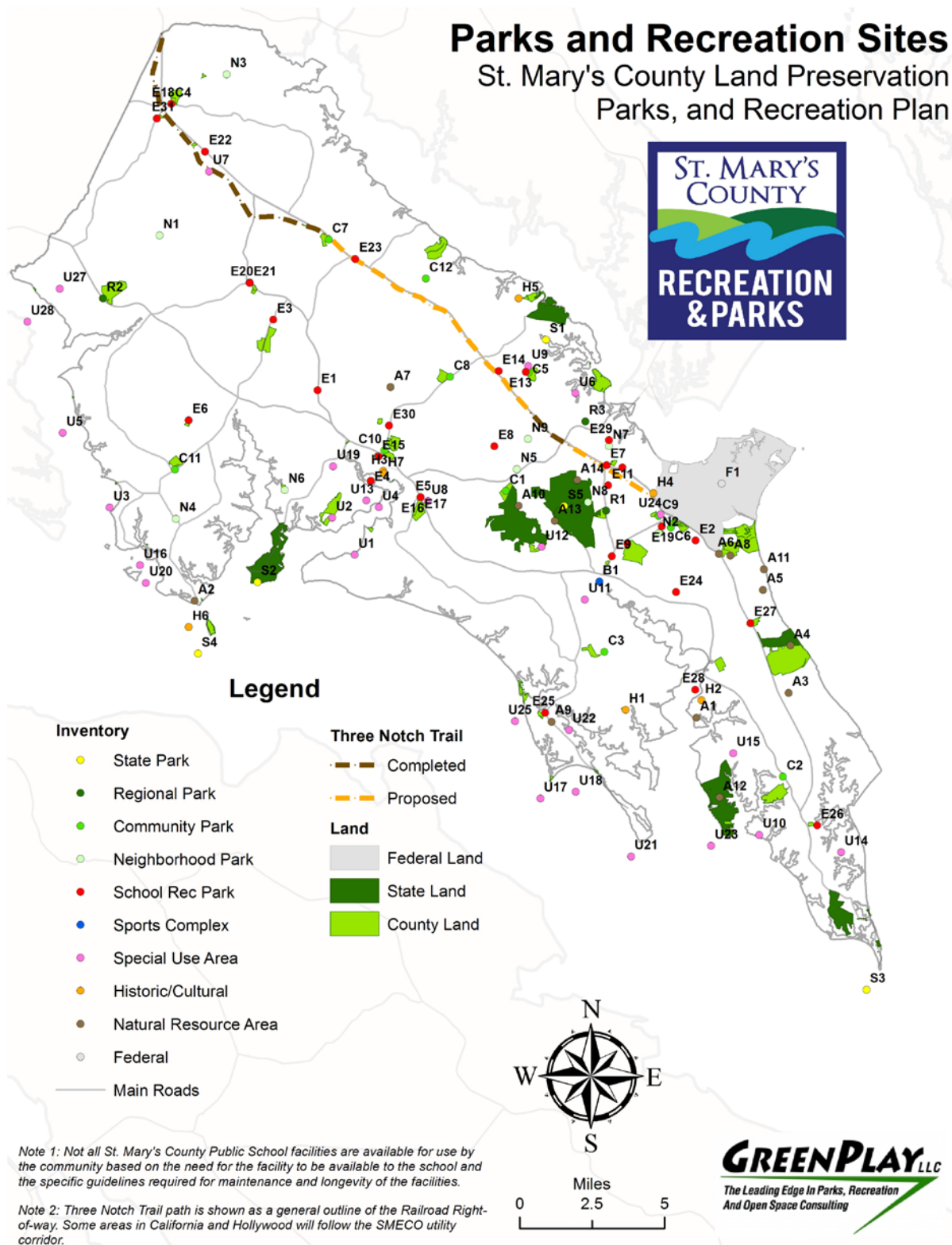


Despite growth in the population, several key demographic characteristics are anticipated to remain stable. In 2015, the St. Mary's County population was mostly comprised of educated, well compensated, Caucasian residents. A detailed demographic report is included in **Appendix B**.

Existing Public Parks, Recreation, and Open System

The existing system of parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County, as illustrated on **Map 2** (larger versions of all Plan maps are included in **Appendix G**), includes a diversity of assets, and programs that provide a range opportunities for public participation in recreational, cultural, and fitness activities. Parks, trails, sports fields and courts, public landings, and other recreation facilities managed by the County and/or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are distributed throughout the County in a such a manner that from any given point in the County, at least one public recreation site is accessible within a 20 minute drive. Given the rural character of the county, residents generally rely on the automobile to access local recreation opportunities. A strong preference was expressed by participants in the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan planning process for being able to access amenities and services within no more than a 20 minute drive.

Map 2: 2017 Public Parks and Recreation Network in St. Mary's County



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Public Parks and Recreation Sites in St. Mary's County

Parks

State

- S1 - Greenwell State Park
- S2 - Newtowne Neck State Park
- S3 - Point Lookout State Park
- S4 - St. Clement's Island State Park
- S5 - St. Mary's River State Park

Regional

- R1 - Chancellor's Run
- R2 - Chaptico Park
- R3 - Myrtle Point Park

Community

- C1 - Beavan Property
- C2 - Cardinal Gibbons Park
- C3 - Cecil Park
- C4 - Fifth District Park
- C5 - Hollywood Soccer Complex
- C6 - John G. Lancaster Park
- C7 - John V. Baggett Park
- C8 - Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- C9 - Nicolet Park
- C10 - Robert Miedzinski Park
- C11 - Seventh District Park
- C12 - Snow Hill Park

Neighborhood

- N1 - Country Lakes Park
- N2 - Jarboesville Park
- N3 - Laurel Ridge Park
- N4 - Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 - St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 - St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 - Town Creek Park
- N8 - Tubman Douglas Field
- N9 - Wildewood Recreation Area

Public School Recreation Areas

- E1 - Banneker ES
- E2 - Carver Heights Community Park & Rec Center
- E3 - Chopticon HS
- E4 - College of Southern Maryland
- E5 - Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 - Dynard ES
- E7 - Esperanza MS
- E8 - Evergreen ES
- E9 - Great Mills HS
- E10 - Green Holly ES
- E11 - Greenview Knolls ES
- E12 - GW Carver ES
- E13 - Hollywood ES
- E14 - Hollywood Rec. Center & Field
- E15 - Leonardtown ES/Park
- E16 - Leonardtown HS
- E17 - Leonardtown MS
- E18 - Lettie Marshall Dent ES
- E19 - Lexington Park ES
- E20 - Margaret Brent MS
- E21 - Margaret Brent Recreation Center
- E22 - Mechanicsville ES

E29 - Town Creek ES

E30 - WF Duke ES

E31 - White Marsh ES

Sports Complex

B1 - Great Mills Pool

Special Use Areas

- U1 - Abell's Wharf
- U2 - Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- U3 - Bushwood Wharf
- U4 - Camp Calvert Landing
- U5 - Chaptico Wharf
- U6 - Clarke's Landing
- U7 - Dennison Property
- U8 - Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County
- U9 - Forest Landing
- U10 - Fox Harbor Landing
- U11 - Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch
- U12 - Indian Bridge Road Watershed
- U13 - Leonardtown Wharf Park
- U14 - Murry Road Waterfront Area
- U15 - Patuxent River Naval Air Station -Webster Field
- U16 - Paul Ellis Landing
- U17 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park
- U18 - Piney Point Landing
- U19 - Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- U20 - River Springs Landing
- U21 - St. George's Island Landing
- U22 - St. Georges Park
- U23 - St. Inigoes Landing
- U24 - St. Mary's Gymnastics Center
- U25 - Tall Timbers Landing
- U27 - Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- U28 - Wicomico Shores Landing

Historical/Cultural

- H1 - Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
- H2 - Historic St. Mary's City
- H3 - Old Jail Museum
- H4 - Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- H5 - Sotterley Plantation
- H6 - St. Clement's Island Museum
- H7 - Tudor Hall Information Center

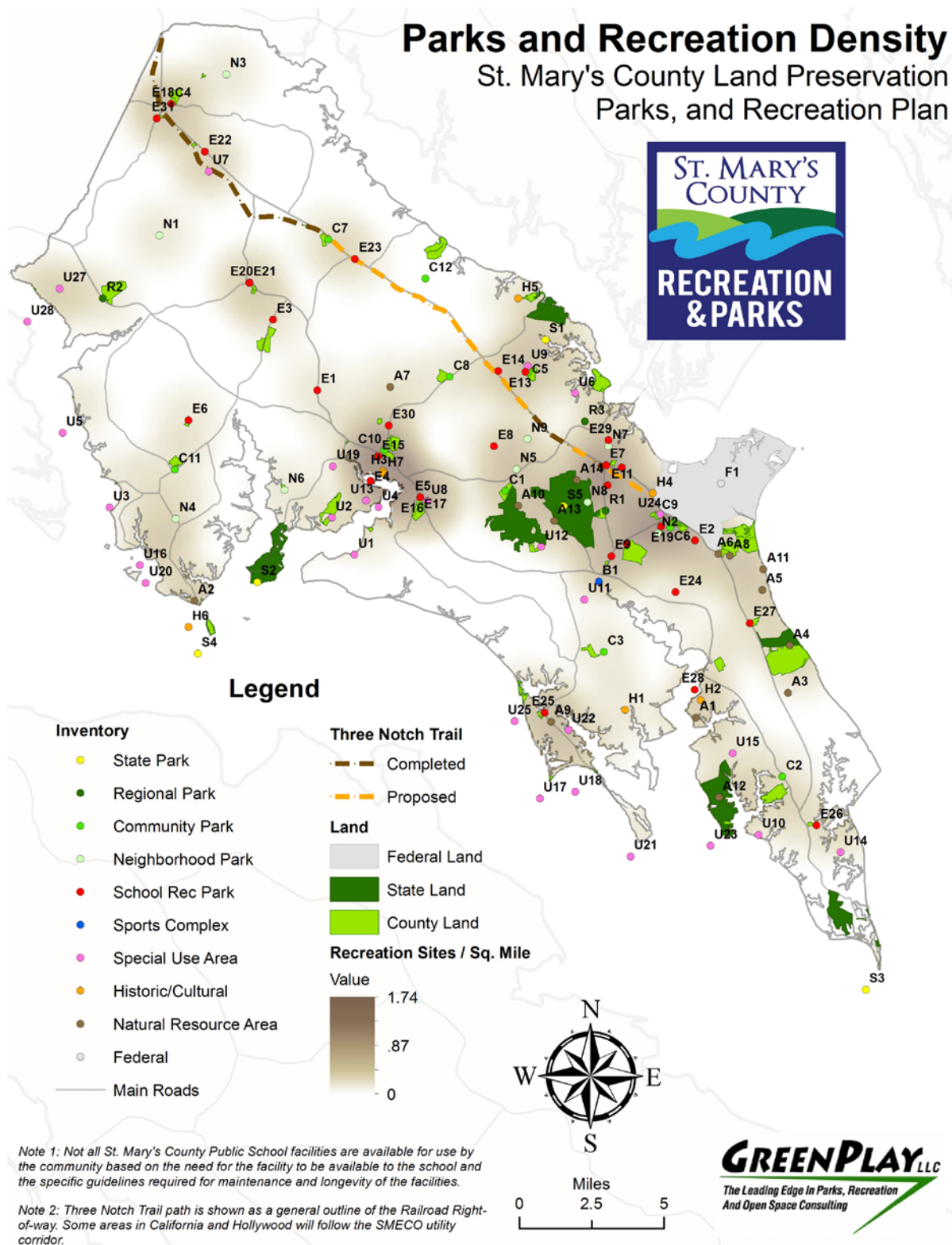
Natural Resource Area

- A1 - Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A2 - Coltons Point Park
- A3 - Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 - Elms Property
- A5 - Facchina Property
- A6 - Fenwick Property
- A7 - McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area
- A8 - Palm Property
- A9 - Piney Point Aquaculture Center
- A10 - Salem State Forest
- A11 - Shannon Farm Park
- A12 - St. Inigoes State Forest
- A13 - St. Mary's River Conservation Land
- A14 - St. Mary's River State Park - Wildlands Area

E23 - Oakville ES
E24 - Park Hall ES
E25 - Piney Point ES
E26 - Ridge ES/Park
E27 - Spring Ridge MS
E28 - St. Mary's College of Maryland

Federal
F1 - Patuxent River Naval Air Station

Map 3: 2017 Parks and Recreation Density



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Within defined growth areas, the County Comprehensive Plan includes an emphasis on enhancing the walkability and access to community amenities without reliance on the automobile. As highlighted by the deeper shading on **Map 3**, there is a concentration of parks, open spaces, and recreation sites in and around Leonardtown, California, and Lexington Park – three of the County’s key development districts and existing areas of concentrated development and population.

Benefits of Parks System

According to the National Recreation and Park Association, “parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region.”¹ The Association identified three key essential values and services public parks and open space areas provide to the public benefit:



Economic Value

- Increase property values and local tax base.
- Are attractive to businesses considering relocation.
- Participants in programs and events generate fee revenues and spend locally on goods and services.

Health and Environmental Benefits

- Facilities, programs, and services provide opportunities for all ages to stay fit and healthy, lowering community health risks.
- Improved air and water quality, provide wildlife habitat and provide buffers to development.
- Provide places for people to connect with nature and recreation outdoors.



Social Importance

- Parks serve as gathering places for social or public events.
- Nationally, people support funding the acquisition of park land and conservation of open space.
- Directly tied to perception of local quality of life.

¹ <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>

III. Parks and Recreation

A. Section Summary

The existing system of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces managed by the County Recreation and Parks Department is a key part of the community infrastructure that supports the high quality of life, rural character, and opportunities for fitness, recreation, and leisure activities that residents and visitors of St. Mary's County treasure. Overall, the County generally appears to be meeting the current recreational needs of many residents and user groups, and opportunities for improving the quality, quantity, and accessibility of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces are identified in this Plan.



Heritage Day Activities at the St. Clement's Island Museum

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Since the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan was last updated in 2012, the County has undertaken initiatives focused on tourism and economic development. These efforts, including a Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan set to be completed by 2017, highlight the significant role that the County's parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces play in making the County a place where people want to live, work, visit, and play, and by doing so, contribute to the local economy. As the County moves forward working toward developing a

stronger tourism economy, there is no doubt the system of public lands and facilities for sports, outdoor recreation, river and Chesapeake Bay access, and cultural interests managed by the Recreation and Parks Department will be critical components of any such efforts.

As the population of St. Mary's County continues to grow, and as the County seeks to leverage its recreation, parks, open spaces, and museum assets as drivers for increasing tourism, the County will need to increase the capacity of the Recreation and Parks Department to provide and manage assets and services to meet the needs of the growing local and visitor user base through long-term strategic capital and operational investments.

B. Existing System of Public Parks and Recreation Amenities

Public Parks, Recreation, and Open Space System

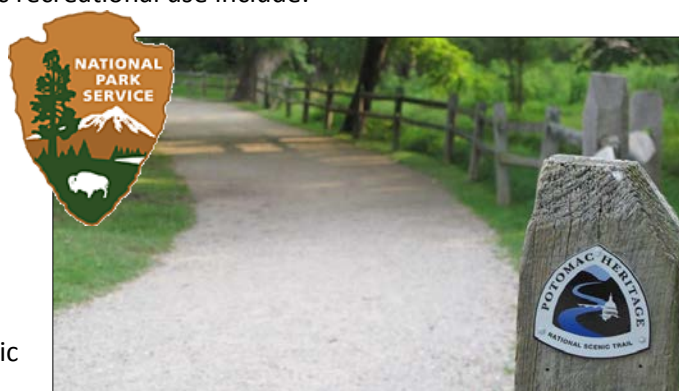
As of May 2017, the existing system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County included 13,265 acres of public parks, forests, waterfront areas, and public landings. **Map 2** illustrates the location of these sites. The acquisition of Shannon Farm and the Snow Hill Park property were major achievements that added nearly 400 acres of parks and open space to the County's system. The majority of the parks, recreation areas, and public open spaces in St. Mary's County were managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the County's Recreation and Parks Department. A detailed inventory of all public parks and recreation sites in St. Mary's County is included in **Appendix E**.

Over 13,000 acres of parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces were available to the public in St. Mary's County as of May 2017.

Federal Recreation Amenities in St. Mary's County

Recreation opportunities provided by the Federal government available to the public in the County are primarily provided by the National Park Service. Although there are no national parks in St. Mary's County, several trails and driving routes managed by the Park Service link together historic, cultural, and environmental sites of interest managed by other providers, including the St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks Department. Additionally, active and retired members of the military and Department of Defense employees have access to recreation facilities and amenities at Navy facilities in the County. Federal recreation assets available for public recreational use include:

- National Park Service:
 - Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail – Southern Maryland Potomac Heritage Trail Bicycling Route
 - Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail
 - Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
 - Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network
- Department of Defense (Navy):
 - Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Webster Field – provides military and Department of Defense employee access/use of sport fields, athletic facility, fishing pier, and hunting area
- Federal Highway Administration
 - Religious Freedom National Scenic Byway



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Photo Credit: National Park Service
<https://www.nps.gov/pohe/index.htm>

The scenic and historic trail networks managed by the National Park Service each highlight significant natural, cultural, and historic resources of the County, as well as the role they played during the nation's early development. Each national trail includes stops at places in the County, including Point Lookout State Park, St. Clement's Island, Leonardtown, and other coastal areas and historic sites. These national trails are not independent parks, but rather highlight routes that link together sites of cultural, historic, and natural resource interests that were integral in the early colonization of the area, and later wars for independence.

St. Mary's County has also benefited from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Administered by the National Park Service and Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Conservation Fund grants have assisted in the purchase of land and development of facilities that directly support public outdoor recreation at sites including St. Clement's Island State Park. These federal grant funds assisted in the purchase of land for the park, and development of facilities that allow for safe public access and recreational use of the site.



State Parks and Resource Lands in St. Mary's County

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources owns and manages several parks, forests, and natural areas that provide significant opportunities for participation in outdoor activities and natural resource based recreation. St. Mary's County is located in the Department's southern management region. As illustrated in **Table 3**, the Department owns 11 properties in the County, totaling 9,031 acres. This equates to 19.5% of the 46,232 acres of land in the Department's southern management unit, which includes Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties.

Table 3: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Properties in St. Mary's County

Maryland DNR Managed Properties	Acres
Elms Property	1,022
Greenwell State Park	596
McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area	81
Newtowne Neck State Park	794
Piney Point Aquaculture Center	66
Point Lookout State Park	1,079
Salem State Forest	1,763
Sotterley (State parcel)	14
St. Inigoes State Forest	911
St. Mary's River State Park	2,643
St. Clement's Island State Park	62
Total Acres:	9,031

Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Owned Lands Acreage Report – Fiscal Year 2016

Over 98% of the land managed by the Department of Natural Resources in St. Mary's County is a state park, or state forest, which provide abundant opportunities for public participation in natural resource based recreation activities. The remaining 2% of DNR lands are managed for aquaculture and wildlife management. The Department's properties in the County also serve to preserve, enhance, and make available to the public a sampling of the unique landscapes and natural resources that define the County's rural and coastal character. One unique property, the Piney Point Aquaculture Center, is home to the Department's Fisheries Service shellfish hatchery. This facility specializes in oyster production that supports aquatic habitat restoration projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay, the Marylanders Grow Oysters program, and the work of the Oyster Recovery Partnership. The Department also partners with the County to provide recreational opportunities at the Elms Property, and partners with non-profit groups to provide additional recreation, historic, and cultural engagement opportunities. State parks and forests in the County receive strong annual usage.



Oyster production at DNR's Piney Point Aquaculture Center

Photo Credit: Maryland DNR

<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/hatcheries/shellfish.aspx>

Recreational Opportunities in State Parks and Forests in St. Mary's County include:

- Hiking/Walking/Jogging
- Camping
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Boating (motorized/non-motorized)
- Nature Appreciation



"To provide County citizens with a comprehensive program of leisure opportunities through services, activities, events, facilities, and outdoor spaces."

Mission Statement

Department of Recreation and Parks

County Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Museums

The St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks manages approximately 95 parks, public landings, recreation facilities, and museums, open spaces, and County government sites totaling over 3,200 acres. The majority of these diverse facilities managed by the Department can be divided into seven functional categories.

1. **Regional Parks** – are typically 100+ acres in size, include a diverse array of public recreation facilities, and are designed to serve large areas of the County. These parks include both natural areas with passive recreation opportunities, and developed areas that support traditional field and court based sports. St. Mary's County has three regional parks:

- Chancellor's Run
- Chaptico
- Myrtle Point

2. **Community Parks** – are typically 15-100 acres in size and largely developed with facilities for field and court sports, playgrounds, and other active uses. Community parks are generally designed to serve populations that reside within relatively close proximity (a few miles, or a short drive away). St. Mary's County has 12 community parks:

- Cardinal Gibbons Park
- Carver Heights Community Park & Recreation Center
- Cecil Park (George E. Cecil Memorial Park)
- Elms Beach Park
- Fifth District Park
- Hollywood Soccer Complex
- John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
- John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove



Chancellors Run Regional Park

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks



Playground at Dorsey Memorial Park

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

- Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- Nicolet Park
- Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
- Seventh District Park
- Snow Hill Park

3. **Public School Recreation Areas** – sports fields and recreation facilities at local schools throughout the County can provide the public with recreation opportunities when they are not in use for school purposes and programs. Although the availability of school facilities for public recreation use differs per facility, in general, there tends to be opportunities available for public use on weekday evenings and weekends. Each school facility also charges a usage fee (excluding field use). In St. Mary's County, there are 28 recreational facilities at schools that provide this type of public use:

- Banneker Elementary School
- Chopticon High School
- College of Southern Maryland
- Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- Capt. Walter F. Duke Elementary School
- Dynard Elementary School
- Esperanza Middle School
- Evergreen Elementary School
- Great Mills High School
- Green Holly School
- Greenview Knolls Elementary School
- GW Carver Elementary School
- Hollywood Elementary School



Leonardtown High School

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

- Leonardtown Elementary School
- Leonardtown High School
- Leonardtown Middle School
- Lettie Marshall Dent School
- Lexington Park Elementary School
- Margaret Brent Middle School
- Mechanicsville Elementary School
- Oakville Elementary School
- Park Hall Elementary School
- Piney Point Elementary School
- Ridge Elementary School/Park
- Spring Ridge Middle School
- St. Mary's College of Maryland
- Town Creek Elementary School
- White Marsh Elementary School

4. **Neighborhood Parks** – are typically less than 15 acres in size, and include open grassy areas for free play, playgrounds, tot lots, and in some neighborhood parks, hard-surfaced sport courts. St. Mary's County has six neighborhood parks:

- Jarboesville Park
- Laurel Ridge Park
- Seventh District Optimist Park
- St. Andrews Estate Park
- St. Clements Shores Park
- Town Creek Park

5. **Public Landings and Special Use Areas** – these include specialized public recreation facilities. In St. Mary's County, there are 27 special use areas, including 15 waterfront public landings:

- Three Notch Trail
- St. Mary's Gymnastics Center
- Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- Fairgrounds – St. Mary's County
- Great Mills Pool
- Abell's Wharf
- Bushwood Wharf
- Camp Calvert Landing
- Carver Recreation Center
- Chaptico Wharf
- Clarke's Landing
- Forest Landing
- Fox Harbor Landing
- Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Hollywood Rec. Center & Field
- Leonard Hall Recreation Center
- Leonardtown Wharf Park
- Margaret Brent Recreation Center
- Paul Ellis Landing
- Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park



Bushwood Wharf

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

- Piney Point Public Landing
- Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- River Springs Landing
- St. George Island Landing
- St. Inigoes Public Landing
- Tall Timbers Landing
- Wicomico Shores Landing

Of the County's special use areas, the Three Notch Trail is unique. As of May 2017 approximately 11 miles of the hiker/biker trail had been constructed between Hughesville (in Charles County) to Lexington Park. The Trail follows the alignment of a former railway (generally paralleling Maryland Route 235), is paved and open for non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle users. Numerous benches, signage, and other amenities are provided along the trail alignment. The Three Notch Trail is becoming a significant recreation, tourism and transportation facility. Existing and future sections of the trail provide linkages between residential areas, schools, libraries and other community facilities, and farmers markets. Completion of this locally and regionally significant trail have been, and remain, a high priority for St. Mary's County. Future planned trail expansion will provide linkages to Leonardtown, Charles, and Calvert Counties. Currently, the trail is one of the most significant pieces of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Southern Maryland.



6. **Natural Resource Areas** – Areas of many County-managed recreation and park properties include acreage that has been purposefully managed for natural resource conservation and low-impact outdoor recreation activities such as walking, hiking, biking, paddle boarding, and nature appreciation. For example, at the 1,020-acre Elms Property, through agreements with the Department of Natural Resources, the County, and St. Mary's County Public Schools, operate the Elms Environmental Education Center, Elms Beach Park, and the County bow hunting area on 476 acres of the site. The State manages the remaining 544 acres for natural resource conservation and hunting.
7. **Historic and Cultural Sites** – In addition to providing public recreation and parks amenities, the St. Mary's Department of Recreation and Parks also manages three museum sites. These assets celebrate and seek to engage visitors with an understanding of important aspects of the history and culture of St. Mary's County. The museums operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks include:
 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park
 - St. Clement's Island Museum (includes the Charlotte Hall Schoolhouse)
 - Drayden African-American Schoolhouse

Other Recreational Services available to the Public

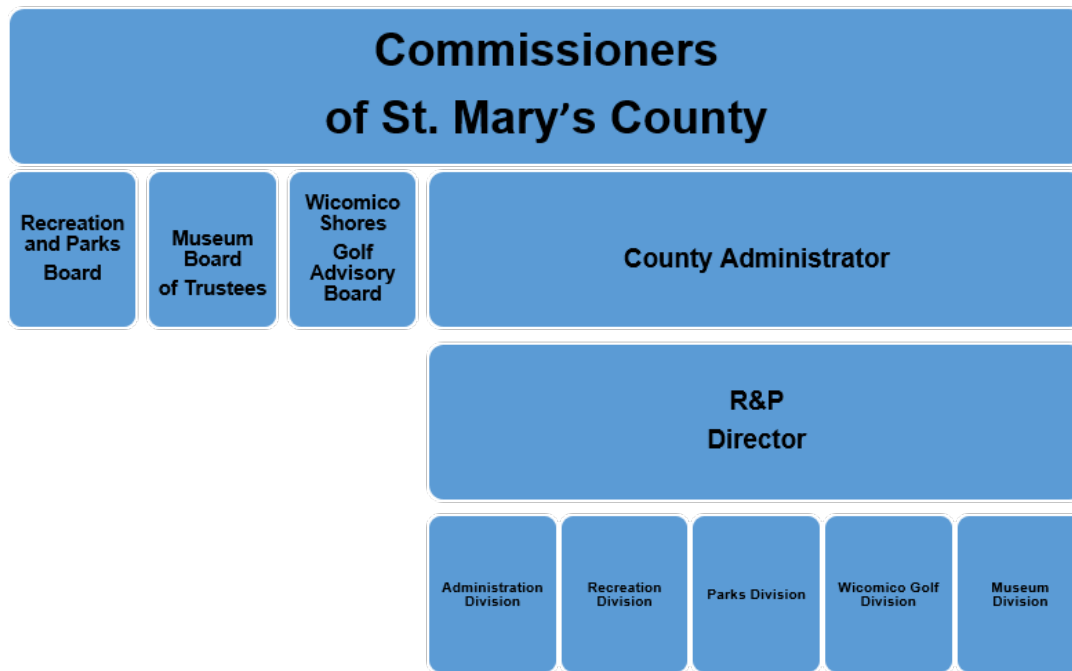
In addition to the parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities noted, there are additional public amenities, private providers, and public/private partnerships that provide recreation opportunities in St. Mary's County. Private providers typically charge a fee for admission or participation. Some of these additional opportunities include, but are far from limited to:

- Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- Historic St. Mary's City
- Point Lookout Lighthouse and Civil War Museum
- Sotterley Plantation
- Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- Tudor Hall and Old Jail Museum
- Leonardtown Arts and Entertainment District

County Recreation and Parks System Administration and Operations

The governing structure that is ultimately responsible for the management of County parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and museum sites is illustrated in **Figure 2**. The operations of the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks are diverse, but are guided by the Department's Mission Statement and comprehensive *Parks Policies and Procedures Manual* (updated February 2016). The Department's day-to-day operations are distributed between five internal divisions. Each division manages specific programs, facilities, or tasks that contribute to the public's use and enjoyment of County-owned parks, recreation, museum, and open space amenities. As of 2016, the Department's core team included 40 full time merit staff positions, with two of these positions being full-time contracted staff members. These employees were spread between the five Recreation and Parks Divisions, which consist of the following.

Figure 2: County Governing Structure for Recreation and Parks



Administration Division:

Manages the overall operations, strategic planning, and capital programs for the Department. The division includes three employees, the Department Director, a Coordinator, and a Fiscal Specialist.

Recreation Division:

Plans, implements, supervises, and evaluates a broad range of recreational programs, services, activities, and recreation facilities for County residents of all ages and abilities. The Recreation Division is operated via an Enterprise Fund as an enterprise, charging fees for programs to cover operational expenses. In FY 2015 and FY 2016, an average of 81,684 participants enrolled in programs offered by the Division. The Division employs 10 full-time positions and over 500 part time employees on average annually to assist in program and service delivery.

Parks Division:

Provides grounds, turf, and facility maintenance at approximately 95 County sites including parks, public landings, County/State buildings, and several school areas. This Division is responsible for the maintenance and management of approximately 2,560 acres of County property. The Parks Division has 16 full time employees. The County also provides funding for several hourly employees to assist with park maintenance.

Wicomico Shores Golf Course:

Operates a 145-acre recreational facility that includes an 18-hole golf course, driving range, restaurant and banquet facility, golf pro shop, tennis courts, and public landing area with additional recreation amenities. Operations at this large facility are self-contained, largely self-supporting, and are administered through an Enterprise Fund. The Golf Course has six full time employees.

**Wicomico Shores Golf Course**

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Museums Division:

Operates facilities and administers interpretive programming for the St. Clement's Island Museum, the Charlotte Hall Schoolhouse, the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park and Historic Boat Collection, and the Drayden African American Schoolhouse. The Museum Division has five full-time employees, and the County provides funding for several hourly employees to assist with various tasks related to visitor services.

**Piney Point Lighthouse and Museum**

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Operating and Capital Budgets

The Recreation and Parks Department operating and capital improvement budgets as of July 2016 are noted below in **Table 4** and **Table 5**.

Table 4: Operating Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks

Spending Unit	FY2014 Approved Budget	FY2015 Approved Budget	FY2016 Approved Budget	FY2017 Approved Budget
County Funded				
Administration	\$1,151,947	\$1,129,704	\$1,182,924	\$1,214,323
Parks Maintenance	\$1,909,143	\$1,985,394	\$2,022,877	\$2,085,308
Museum Division	\$503,452	\$527,832	\$581,003	\$560,367
Grants	\$129,000	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$70,000
Non-Profit Agencies	0	0	0	87,580
County Funded Subtotal	\$3,693,542	\$3,717,930	\$3,886,804	\$4,017,578
Enterprise Funds				
Recreation Activity Fund	\$2,814,589	\$3,464,613	\$3,554,880	\$3,602,861
Wicomico Golf Fund	\$1,518,876	\$1,482,803	\$1,344,131	\$1,385,283
Enterprise Funds Subtotal	\$4,333,465	\$4,947,416	\$4,899,011	\$4,988,144
TOTAL OPERATING	\$8,027,007	\$8,665,346	\$8,785,815	\$9,005,722

Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Finance and Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Funding for the operations of the system of parks, recreation sites, open spaces, and museums managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks comes from two main sources. County funding through the general budget provides resources for the overall operation and maintenance of the majority of park, recreation, open space, and museum sites. Two of the Department's divisions, the Recreation Division, and Wicomico Shores Golf Course, are operated as Enterprise Funds, charging fees for participation in programs, use of facilities, etc., with income generally covering all or most of the operational costs of their programs and facilities. Recreation Division facility improvements are dependent on funding from non-enterprise sources, such as the general fund, outside grants, and Program Open Space funding; however, Golf Course facility improvements have traditionally been funded through the Golf Enterprise Fund.

Table 5: Capital Improvement Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks

Parks & Facilities	FY2017 Approved
Chaptico Park – Phased Development	\$175,000
Piney Point Lighthouse Museum	\$100,000
Park Land Acquisition	\$143,500
Recreation Facility Improvements	\$1,390,200
St. Clement's Island Museum Renovations	\$30,000
Nicolet Park Entrance	\$965,000
Parks & Facilities Subtotal	\$2,803,700
Public Landings	
Derelict Boat Removal	\$10,000
St. Inigoes Landing	\$190,000
Public Landings Subtotal	\$200,000
TOTAL R&P CAPITAL	\$3,003,700

Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Finance and Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Program Open Space

A significant source of capital funding for the acquisition, development, and/or rehabilitation of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities in St. Mary's County is the Localside Program of Maryland's Program Open Space. As previously illustrated on **Table 1**, since 2012, and projected through 2017, Localside funds have been utilized (or are planned to be utilized) by the County to fund an annual average of \$218,647 on land acquisition and \$151,417 on facility improvement projects that support the enhancement and expansion of the County's parks and recreation system, and achievement of goals of this Plan.

The County's current Annual Program for Proposed Program Open Space Acquisition and Development projects (fiscal year 2017) includes proposals to utilize Localside funding to help fund parks and recreation enhancement projects throughout the county, including the continued development of the Three Notch Trail.



**Three Notch Trail Phase VI
A Program Open Space supported project.**

Photo Credit: St. Mary's Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Over the past several years the County has been very successful in acquiring land for recreation and conservation purposes with the assistance of Program Open Space. Most recently, in March 2017, St. Mary's County achieved a major land preservation and recreation goal with the acquisition of the 163 acre Snow Hill Park property. The new park is located in the sixth election district and has approximately 1,500' of frontage along the Patuxent River. This important acquisition satisfied two of the County's goals for acquiring land to develop a "Patuxent River Waterfront Park" and "Central Patuxent Public Landing" (see **Appendix F: St. Mary's County 2017 LPPRP Capital Improvement Recommendations**). Future development at the site is envisioned to include a waterfront park and public landing, and provide facilities and amenities for diverse recreation opportunities for hiking and nature trails; forested/conservation areas and nature interpretation; fishing; canoeing and kayaking; motorized boat ramp and pier; picnic areas; playground; flexible use practice athletic fields; parking and restrooms. The purchase of the property was a partnership between St. Mary's County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (local and stateside Program Open Space funding), and the US Navy (Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration <REPI> funding). Other sites recently acquired with Program Open Space assistance included the former Beavan property and Shannon Farm property. These were also major acquisitions and sites are envisioned to be developed with passive and active recreation opportunities identified as in-need in the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.

Since 2012, the County has utilized over \$2 million in Localside funds on projects to enhance existing recreation facilities, including improvements to athletic field lighting and other functional amenities, and the purchase of hundreds of acres of land to expand recreational opportunities and

conserve natural land with outdoor recreation value. As it has for decades, the County will continue to rely on Program Open Space Localside grants in working to meet the existing and future recreation needs of the County's population. With major land acquisitions recently completed, the development and enhancement of recreation facilities and amenities will be a priority for the County of the next five years.

"Established under the Department of Natural Resources in 1969, POS symbolizes Maryland's long term commitment to conserving our natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens."

Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Program Open Space

Children in Nature

The majority of St. Mary's County parks and open spaces provided opportunities for children and families to engage with nature. Even sites with developed recreation facilities, such as Lancaster Park and its heavily utilized athletic fields, often included undeveloped natural areas. The one-mile perimeter loop trail at Lancaster Park was reported to be a popular amenity, often used by families while visiting the site for a child's sports team practice. The Department of Recreation and Parks, Recreation Division also provided programs for engaging children, youth, and teens with nature in parks and open spaces. Several programs run by the Recreation Division include:

The Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature is a public and private partnership that has worked collaboratively to:

- *Provide opportunities for children to play and learn outdoors*
- *Promote environmental literacy*
- *Foster collaboration among educators*
- *Improve student and teacher outdoor learning experiences*

- **Teens on the Go:** a six-week summer camp program for kids going into 8th grade through 12th grade that focuses on getting out and learning tools to explore St. Mary's County. Campers Geocache throughout the County, in parks, and throughout the woods to find small trinkets in hidden places.
- **Elms Beach Camp:** a four-week youth camp spent outdoors learning about nature and water. Campers spend their week learning to canoe, to spot poison ivy, and creating outdoorsy arts and crafts, all while making new friends and lasting memories.
- **More to Explore Passport Program:** encourages children and adults to get outside and enjoy parks, historic sites, water trails, and farmers markets throughout the County, and to tour beautiful Leonardtown. Each location has a post with a marker for participants to do a rubbing in their passport and/or a password to enter on the online version. Participants who visit 12 of the 22 sites are entered into a prize drawing.

The Recreation and Parks Department's Museum Division encourages youth engagement and learning about the County's cultural and natural resources through interactive exhibits, events, nature scavenger hunts for children at the St. Clement's Island Museum, and outreach programs and tours with County public schools.

In addition to programs managed by the Recreation and Parks Department, the 1,020 acre state-owned Elms property is managed by several user groups. About 476 acres are leased to St. Mary's County for the St. Mary's County Public Schools' (SMCPS) Elms Environmental Education Center and the Recreation and Parks' Elms Beach Park (and separate county-managed bow hunting area). The remaining 544 acres are managed by Maryland DNR for hunting and conservation purposes.

The Elms Environmental Education Center "Lifelines of the Chesapeake" teaches environmental ecology and related subjects to K-12 students on a year-round basis. The site includes a number of study areas such as pathways, bridges, beach areas, ponds, wetlands, and woods. The facility hosts over 7,000 students and over 1,000 chaperones annually; most are from St. Mary's County, but some are from the Southern Maryland Region and Washington, D.C. Future plans propose the creation of additional trails, field sites, and an outpost classroom.

Planning for Coastal Resiliency

With numerous waterfront parks and facilities spread along the County's 500+ miles of coastline, St. Mary's County has undertaken measures in its capital planning and facility management of coastal resources that consider rising sea level and increased potential for storm damage and flooding of shoreline areas. Some practices put into use at public landings and waterfront assets include: 1) new piers are now being constructed at higher elevations, and 2) the installation of floating docks where practical. Low impact development tools, such as raingardens and Bay-wise plantings, are being installed at coastal sites, including the Piney Point Lighthouse, to improve storm water management and flood control. In other areas, the County seeks to mitigate damage caused by flooding by removing inappropriate land uses, naturalizing flood prone areas, and installing a use/facility that is more appropriate to the site. For example, the County converted a flood prone site near the headwaters of the St. Mary's River that included residential apartments into the Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch. The Recreation and Parks Department plans to leverage all practical opportunities to utilize these types of measures in the future at coastal sites, and will continue to explore new ideas to address sea-level rise and other coastal concerns while seeking to maximize citizen access to waterfront areas. Programs including the State Waterway Improvement Fund have been utilized in St. Mary's County to improve public access to waterfront recreation opportunities, and to fund other shoreline improvement projects.

C. Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

Residents and visitors in St. Mary's County participate in a wide array of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities, and according to recent survey results, most do so at public parks, open spaces, and recreation areas. Through the County's system of parks, recreation facilities, and museums, the Department of Recreation and Parks offers a wide assortment of infrastructure and amenities that provide opportunities for a variety of self-directed and organized recreational endeavors. For example, the County's public landings provide water access for fishing and boating; trails provide opportunities for hiking, walking, and cycling; and athletic fields annually host thousands of games and practices of various league sports.

Unlike other forms of community infrastructure, parks, recreation, and open space amenities combine both developed and natural elements that serve a wide variety of functions that benefit the general public. The positive benefits of parks and natural areas are well documented, and public participation in recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities and opportunities that are made available by this infrastructure can have significant impacts on community identity, public health, and community well-being; preservation of natural ecological systems and services; and economic vitality.



Adult Pickleball

Photo Credit: St. Mary's County
Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Measured Participation in County Recreation Division Programs

Through structured programming, the Recreation Division offers year-round recreation, sports, and leisure programming for people of all ages and abilities. A wide variety of programs are offered annually and include youth and adult sports, fitness, and leisure activities; safety and self-defense courses; arts and crafts; camps; before and after school programs; and therapeutic recreation programs. Program guides are issued by the Recreation Division on quarterly basis and provide a full listing of current offerings, registration information, and customer service contacts. The current program guide is available at the Recreation and Department's website (www.stmarysmd.com/recreate).

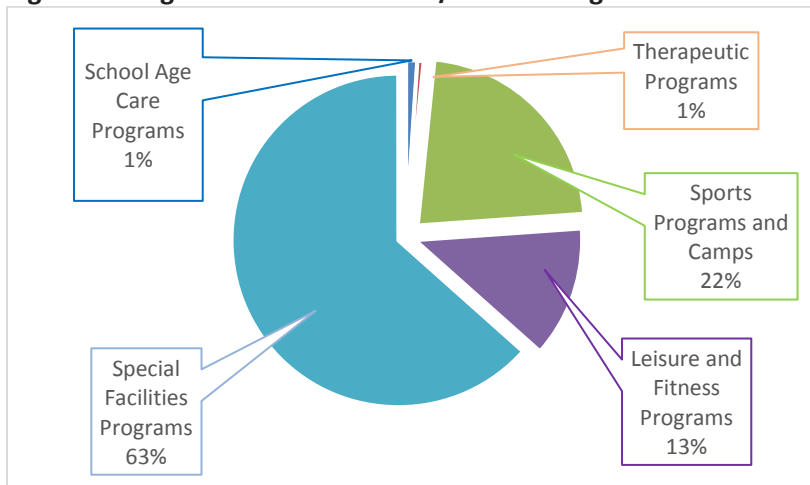
The Recreation Division tracks annual enrollment of participants in the sports, recreation, and leisure programs it offers throughout the County, and the data indicates that a significant number of people participate in these programs annually. The Division's FY2015 and FY2016 data reports an annual average of 81,684 total registrations for its programs. This figure does not represent the number of individual participants in programs, as one person can register for multiple programs throughout the year (and many do). For example, if every participant registered for three Division programs, this would equate to 27,228 participants ($81,684 / 3 = 27,228$), or approximately 25% of the County's population. Although the total number of individuals participating in Division programs is unknown, it is reasonable to presume based on registration data that a high number of County households include members that participate in the Recreation Division's programs.

Programs offered by the Recreation Division are categorized by the following functional groupings:

- School Age Care Programs
- Therapeutic Recreation Programs
- Sports Programs and Camps
- Leisure and Fitness Programs
- Special Facilities Programs

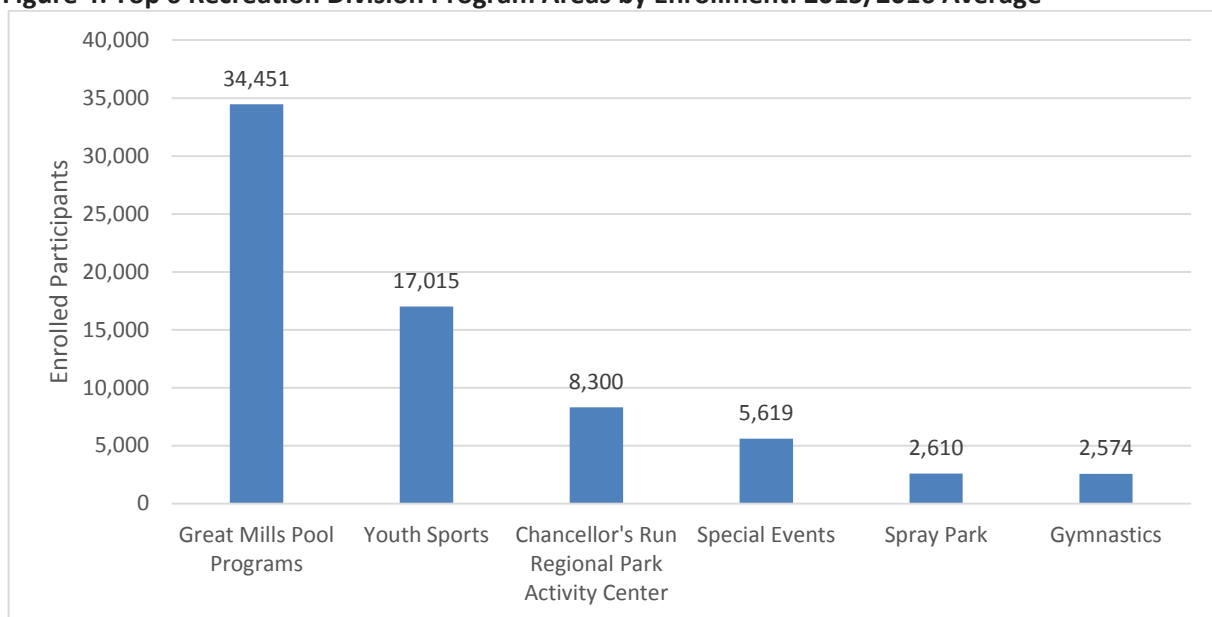
As illustrated in **Figure 3**, the majority of participants had enrolled in special facilities programs, sports programs and camps, or leisure and fitness programs. Overall, registration for programs at the Great Mills Pool complex were by far the highest. **Figure 4** compares enrollment figures for the top six most popular (by number of enrolled participants) Division program offerings.

Figure 3: Program Enrollment: 2015/2016 Average



Source: St. Mary's County Recreation Division

Figure 4: Top 6 Recreation Division Program Areas by Enrollment: 2015/2016 Average



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks – Recreation Division

Based on the data reviewed and feedback from staff, enrollment in the majority of Division programs appears relatively steady, with one notable exception. Enrollment in therapeutic programs appears to be on the rise. Over the past two years, enrollment in the five therapeutic programs saw significant increases, with overall enrollment climbing 62% from 358 in 2015 to 581 in 2016.

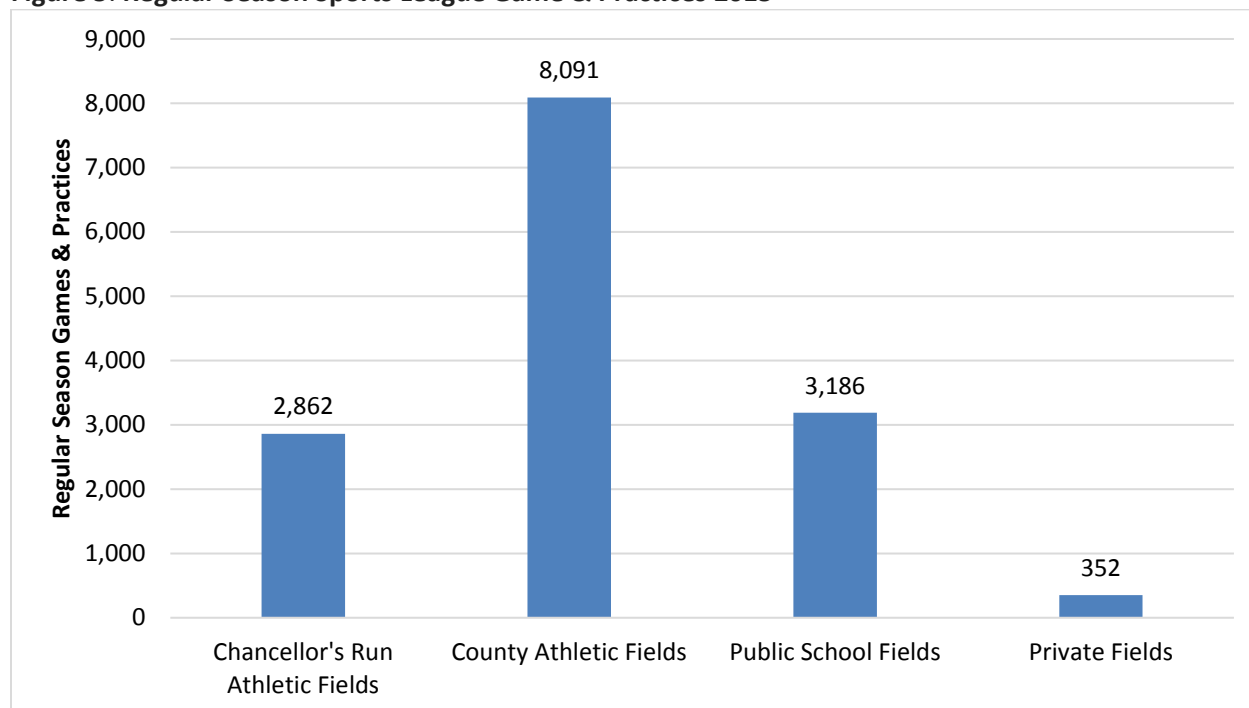
The statistics on recreation program participation and facility usage tracked by the Recreation Division are highly important to consider in decision making. A significant portion of the community is known to utilize the diverse services offered by the Division, and staff reports that their ability to grow and improve program offerings to meet increasing demands is heavily stifled by the limitations of the existing facilities in which the Division operates. A number of the Division's key facilities are old, repurposed County school buildings and grounds that struggle to meet existing program demands. For example, as highlighted in **Figure 5**, the Recreation and Parks Department's athletic fields receive intense and consistent use, with over 14,000 sports games and practices played on County managed fields in 2015.



Camp Inspire at NAS Patuxent River

Photo Credit. St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Figure 5: Regular Season Sports League Game & Practices 2015



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks FY2015 Fiscal Report Special Facilities

Estimated Household Participation in Recreation, Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities

In addition to data from the Recreation Division, the overall participation rate of St. Mary's County households in a variety of recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities was estimated using data-driven models. This analysis utilized Esri Business Analyst models that combined demographic, lifestyle, and spending estimates, and yielded insight into the general participation habits of County residents in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. The models also estimated the County-wide economic impact of spending by County households on various recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. Data used in the analysis was the most currently available from Esri as of September 2016. The full findings of this analysis are included in **Appendix C**.

St. Mary's County estimated the average annual number of Three Notch Trail users in 2015 and 2016 was at least 30,000, based on road/trail crossing beacon counter usage.

Highlights of the estimated participation rate of County households in a variety of sports, outdoor recreation, fitness, and leisure activities in St. Mary's County include:

- Thirty-one percent (31%) of households include at least one member that is likely to walk for fitness.
 - There were 53 miles of designated trails for the public use in state, county, and local parks and open spaces throughout the county that provide opportunities for walking, hiking, and biking. The 11.25 miles (constructed to date) of the Three Notch Trail is longest, most visible, and heavily trafficked multiple use trail in St. Mary's County.
- Going to the beach, fishing, camping, hiking, and road bicycling are likely popular outdoor recreation activities for members of County households.
 - Expansion of water dependent and trail based recreation opportunities has been and will continue to be a goal of St. Mary's County.
 - The July 2017 opening of new, limited waterfront recreation opportunities at the recently acquired Snow Hill Park property represented a milestone in creating new public water access in the County. Enhancement of recreation opportunities and water access for the public at the site could help address long-standing needs.
- Approximately between 4% and 12% of County households are likely to include members who participate in team or individual organized sports, including soccer, tennis, basketball, and golf.
 - High rates of participation in organized team sports and athletic programs were also reported by the Recreation Division.

In addition to being enjoyable activities, participation sports, recreation, fitness, and leisure activities can have community wide positive impacts, including in public health, maintaining community vitality, and supporting a diverse economic base. As further documented in **Appendix C**, Esri estimates that the average household in St. Mary's County spends an average of \$1,163 annually on general fees and costs associated with participation in recreation, sports, and outdoor leisure activities. This equates to a total estimated annual countywide economic impact of over \$47.7 million.

Economic Impacts of household spending on recreation in St. Mary's County:

\$1,163

Estimated Average Annual Household Spending

\$47.7 million

Estimated Total Annual Household Spending

D. Level of Service Analysis

Measuring the Current Level of Service of St. Mary's County Public Parks and Recreation System

For the purposes of measuring the level of service provided by the existing system of public parks, recreation, and open space facilities in St. Mary's County, the analysis conducted utilized a multifaceted approach that reviewed current perceptions and interests, the influence of existing user demand, the likely impacts of continued population growth, and a study of the general accessibility of park system assets throughout the County. The components of this level of service are listed below:

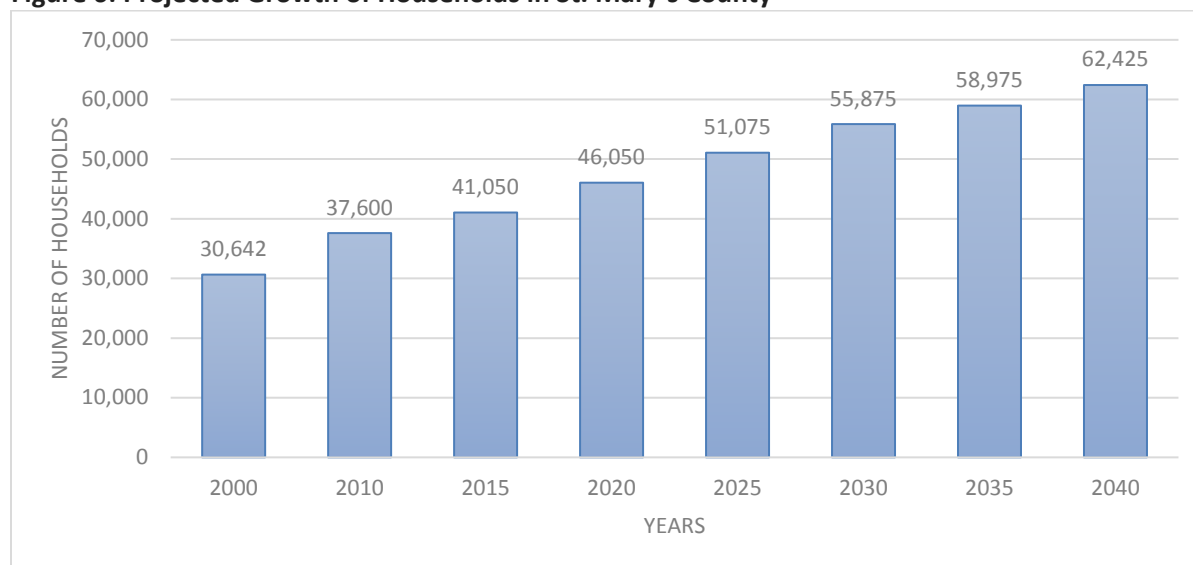
- Current demographic and recreation participation trends.
- Analysis of perceptions and information from public, stakeholder, and staff engagement.
- Analysis of open link survey data regarding current usage and satisfaction with the existing system of parks and recreation amenities.
- GIS-based proximity and access analysis of public parks and recreation facilities.
- Summary of findings and considerations for goals and recommendations.

Each of these individual components of the level of service analysis contribute information, ideas, and perceptions that help create a comprehensive view of where, and how, the County should consider making strategic investments to improve public parks and recreation resources for the public benefit. Key findings from the review of all level of service components were used to develop goals and recommendations to guide the enhancement of existing County parks, recreation, cultural, and open space amenities and delivery of associated public services.

Summary of Demographic and Recreation Participation Trends

As presented in demographics and recreation trends reports included as **Appendices B and C**, the overall population of the County has been growing, and that trend is projected to continue at a strong rate for the foreseeable future. The projected population growth was previously noted in **Figure 1**, and projected growth of households is noted below in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Projected Growth of Households in St. Mary's County



Source: Maryland Department of Planning

As discussed in Section III-C Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities, current participation figures tracked by the Recreation Division, and data-driven estimates of household participation in recreation and sports related activities, indicate that publicly accessible programs, parks, and other recreation opportunities are important components of the quality of life in St. Mary's County. Quite simply, there are tens of thousands of known participants in recreation activities provided by the Recreation Division, and Esri models estimate strong overall countywide household participation in a variety of sports, fitness, recreation, and outdoor activities. Based on this information, it is reasonable to assume that a significant percentage of residents and visitors of St. Mary's County regularly utilize public parks, recreation amenities, public landings, cultural sites, and open spaces at their leisure. Currently, the County does not formally measure open usage of many of its amenities, but it is considering implementing some means of gathering additional usage data in the future.

When considering the existing solid interest and participation in recreation activities, and high demand for facilities, in tandem with strong population growth, the County should expect to see an increase in use of, and demand for, public parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

Summary of Findings from Public, Stakeholder, and Staff Engagement

As part of the update of this Plan, conversations, focus group meetings, and public meetings were held where County elected and appointed officials, staff, stakeholders, and the general public were invited to provide their feedback, ideas, and perceptions regarding the current public parks and recreation system in the County. The public and stakeholder engagement process utilized in the planning process is outlined in Section II-B, Planning Process and Public Engagement of this Plan. The majority of staff and stakeholder feedback was received during multiple meetings, and five stakeholder focus group sessions were held in August and September 2016. The majority of public feedback received during the planning process was from an internet-based survey. A summary of the key findings from staff and the five stakeholder focus groups is as follows:

County Staff:

- Recreation and Parks facilities and programs receive heavy use, with demand for some resources exceeding program or facility capacity.
- Heavy usage and demand on athletic fields taxes the ability of the existing field maintenance program to keep the fields in high quality, playable shape for users. Turf is not allowed adequate time to recover from intense usage, which degrades the quality of the facility.
- Much of the programming of the Recreation Division is operated out of former County schools, or civic buildings that were adaptively reused as recreation and activity centers. Most of these facilities are far past their practical useful lifespan and are in need of repair, renovation, or replacement.
- Increasing tourism activity is a current focus for County administration and elected officials. A tourism master planning process was in development as of September 2016. As part of that process, and logically so, the Recreation and Parks Department, and many of the facilities it operates, were identified as key components of any future tourism effort undertaken by the County.
- The Recreation and Parks Department appears only limited by resources made available to maintain and enhance the County's parks, recreation facilities, programs, museums, and open spaces for residents and visitors.

- Museums operated by the Recreation and Parks Department are in need of additional staffing and capital resources to keep up with needed facility upgrades, enhancements, and maintaining and growing exhibits and special events.

Outdoor Sports and Natural Resource Based Recreation – Stakeholder Focus Group

- Additional and connected multiple use trail opportunities are needed throughout the County.
- Completing the Three Notch Trail should remain a priority.
- Expand water access for paddle boarders and boaters. Create additional parking capacity at existing boat ramps and put-ins, and construct new launch points throughout the County.

League Sports – Stakeholder Focus Group

- The existing inventory of public and private athletic fields available for sports leagues and team play in the County is insufficient to meet existing demand. Soccer leagues report additional field needs, and PAX River Rugby Club reports that it would like to use a public field, but has been forced to lease space privately.
- Existing athletic field quality is negatively impacted from intense use.
- Neighborhood tennis facilities are great, but the County lacks a facility that could support tennis league play or year-round play. A tennis complex should be considered for development in the central area of the County.
- Additional and dedicated pickleball facilities should be developed.
- A centrally-located outdoor sports complex is desired to handle demand for additional games and tournaments.

Museums, Cultural, and Historic Resources – Stakeholder Focus Group

- Historical and cultural preservation is integral to protecting County character.
- Many existing resources, such as those that highlight the African American experience during settlement and Civil War times in the County, the area’s agricultural roots, and special historical events, should be better marketed to locals and visitors.
- County Recreation and Parks museum facilities are generally perceived as being in need of updating. Staff does a good job with the resources they have, but more could be done to make these sites more interesting and engaging.
- The St. Clement’s Island Water Taxi is old and subject to occasional break downs. It is a wonderful amenity, and people hope it continues to operate.

Indoor Sports and Leisure Activities – Stakeholder Focus Group

- Indoor court space should be created for tennis and pickleball.
- Existing indoor facilities are old and do not serve all functional needs. Leonard Hall Recreation Center is programmed to the maximum extent possible.
- Use of indoor facilities at school sites costs more than using Recreation and Parks facilities.
- Need space for other indoor sports such as volleyball, roller hockey, and other activities.
- A centrally-located recreation center is needed for indoor sports, games, practices, a fitness center and other activities.

Non-Government Parks and Recreation Providers – Stakeholder Focus Group

- The Fairgrounds property is a great asset to the County that hosts large events throughout the year.
- Cultural amenities and historic resources managed by non-governmental groups, such as Historic St. Mary's City and Sotterley, add interesting experiences and amenities to the community that supplement parks, museums, and other resources provided by public agencies.

Summary of Findings from the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Survey

A survey consisting of 17 questions focused on gauging people's perceptions of public parks, recreation opportunities, museums, and open space in St. Mary's County was open to the public for a period of two-weeks in September 2016. A similar survey was conducted for the 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. Both surveys were hosted in an open-link, online format on the County Department of Recreation and Parks website. Invitations to participate in the 2016 survey were sent to thousands of residents who are signed up for recreation programs, and was publicized on the

Department of Recreation and Parks website and Facebook page. The 2012 survey received fewer than 500 responses, and the 2016 survey received 1,436 responses. The Recreation and Parks staff credit the dramatic increase in survey responses on an overall increase in public interest in their programs, facilities, and parks, and on the significant growth of social media use as an everyday means of communication between the Department and public.

What would encourage you to use County parks and recreation amenities more often?

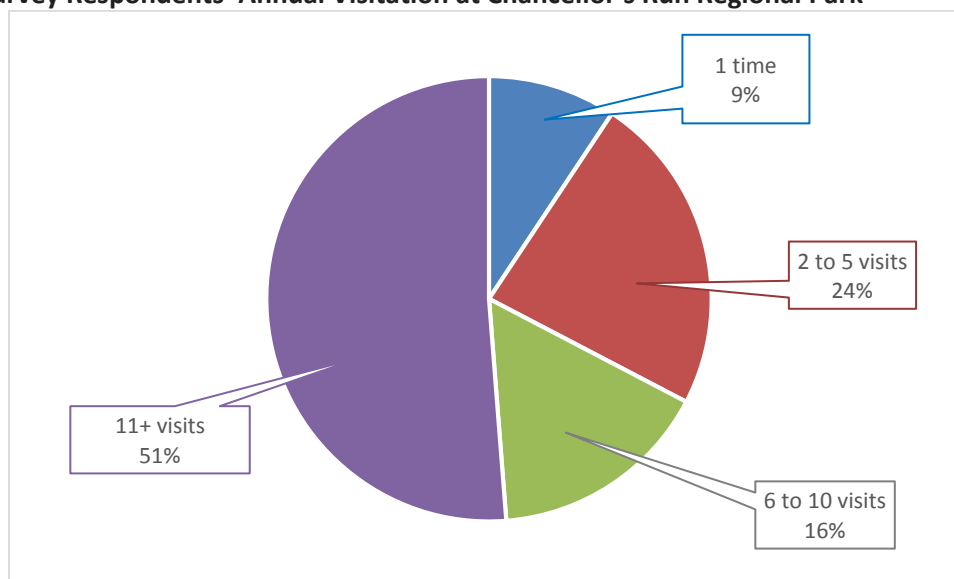
A majority of 2016 survey respondents said:

- **Increase access and comfort amenities** (parking, restroom, lighting, etc.) and enhance maintenance.
- **Improve and expand sports facilities**, especially athletic fields.
- **Expand and connect trails and other amenities** for walking and bicycling.

As was the case in 2012, the 2016 survey was not intended to be statistically valid, and was hosted in a fashion that allowed for open participation. Unlike a statistically-valid survey, the open method utilized in this process did not appear to capture a strong response from people who do not currently use County parks and recreation amenities. However, the overall results of the survey provide insight into the general attitudes and perceptions of self-identified County parks and recreation amenity users. The administration of a statically-valid survey in the future would be beneficial for capturing the opinions of residents who may not be regular users of county parks and recreation facilities and programs. A full report of the survey, including extensive comments submitted from respondents, was created as a resource document for the staff of the Department of Recreation and Parks. A full summary of key findings from each survey question is included as **Appendix D** of this Plan. The overall key findings of the survey are noted below:

- A total of 1,436 responses received over a two week period in September 2016.
- Ninety-six percent (96%) of survey respondents identified as residents of St. Mary's County.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household had utilized a County park, recreation facility, museum, or public landing, and 70% indicated visitation to a State park in the County in the past year.
- Facilities with athletic fields tended to be the most frequently visited. For example, as indicated in **Figure 7**, 51% of respondents who indicated using Chancellor's Run Regional Park noted that they visited the facility more than 10 times in the past year.

Figure 7: Survey Respondents' Annual Visitation at Chancellor's Run Regional Park



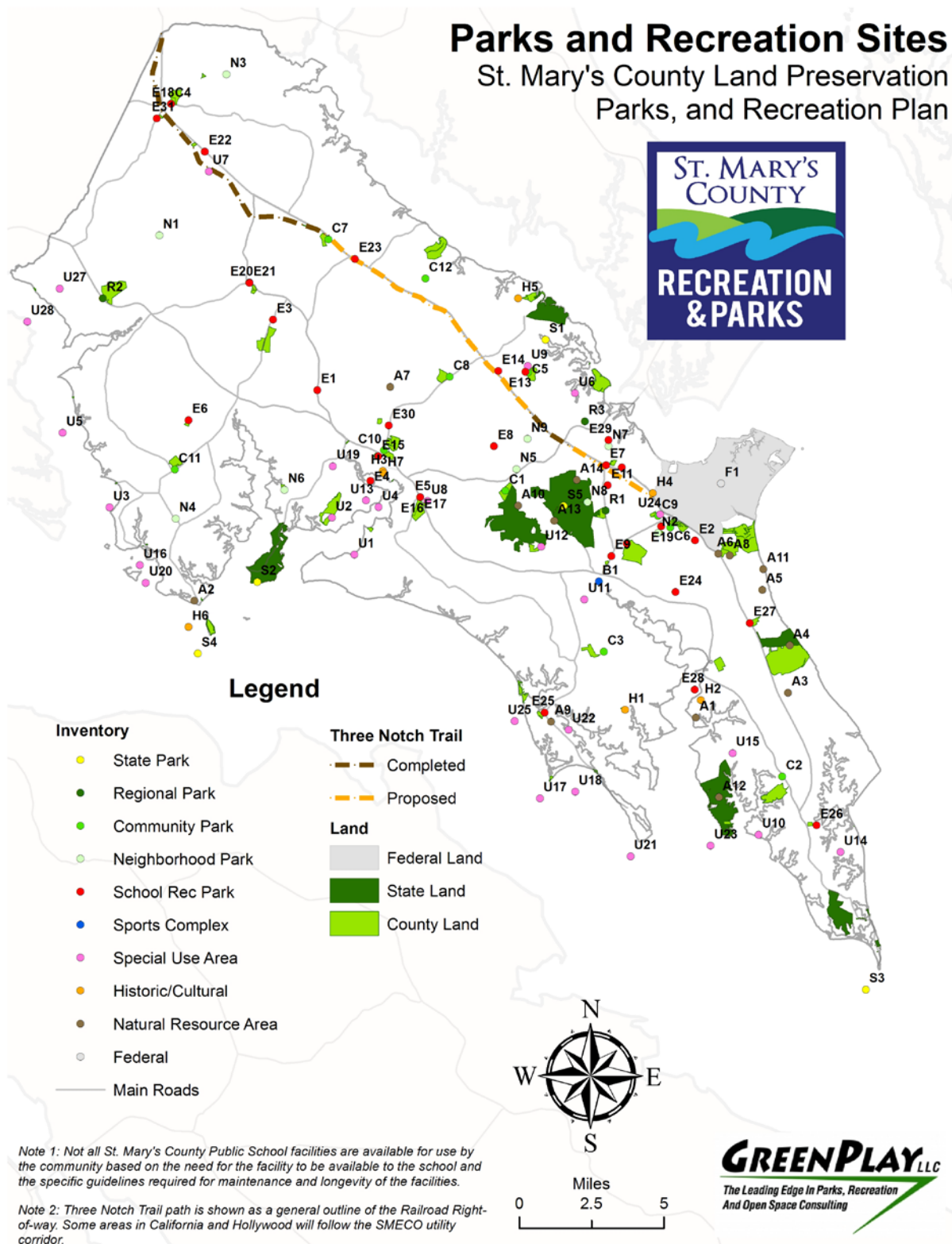
Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks

- Respondents indicated that the facilities they visited the least in the past year were the Paul Ellis Landing, Fox Harbor Landing, and Drayden African American Schoolhouse. Most respondents who indicated using these facilities noted that they did so one time in the past year.
- The general condition of the facilities operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks was considered good by survey respondents. The majority of respondents considered the condition of 23 facilities to be in “good to excellent” condition, but rated the condition of 11 facilities as generally in “poor to fair” condition.
- When asked what could be done to encourage them, or a household member, to use St. Mary's parks, recreation, and cultural amenities more often, 686 individual ideas were presented by respondents.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the availability of County parks, recreation, and open space opportunities is important, and that the creation of new parks and open spaces, and expanded opportunities for recreation would enhance the community/County.
- Of the programs offered by the Recreation Division, sports programs had the highest levels of participation by survey respondents.
- Over 70% of respondents indicated receiving information about County recreation programs by referral/word of mouth, the Recreation and Parks website, and/or the recreation program guides.
- When asked what future facilities the County should consider investing in to meet the needs of the County's growing population, 74% of respondents indicated an indoor recreation center, 53% noted an outdoor sports complex, 45% noted more hiking and biking trails, and 42% suggested more beach and water access.

Analysis and Findings from GIS-based Proximity/Access Analysis

General access to all County and State managed parks and areas that provide public recreation opportunities was measured as part of this planning process. This analysis reviewed the distribution of these public assets throughout the County, the distribution of the County's population, and estimated accessibility of parks and recreation assets. As a largely rural county, park facility users and program participants expect to travel by automobile to access recreation opportunities. Through the planning process, staff and stakeholders indicated a willingness to travel relatively short distances to use county parks. Access and proximity were estimated with areas of County illustrated within a ten minute drive (approximate five-mile radius) or within a ten-to-twenty-minute drive (approximate ten mile radius) of parks or recreation facilities. In general, areas within ten minutes of a park or recreation site were considered to have good access to that amenity. Areas within ten-to-twenty minutes from a park or recreation facility were considered to have good-to-moderate access to these amenities. Additional analysis of specific, county managed park, recreation, and museum assets was also conducted. Maps illustrating the distribution of public parks and recreation assets, and areas of the County with relatively easy access to these amenities are included in this analysis. Larger, foldout versions of these maps are available in **Appendix G**.

Map 4: Driving Distance to Public Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces in St. Mary's County



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 4 illustrates areas of the County within short driving distances of all public parks, recreation, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County. As illustrated, at least one public recreation site, park, museum, or open space is accessible within a ten-minute drive of nearly every point in the County. Overall, residents and visitors appear to have relatively easy access to parks and places to enjoy sports, fitness, culture, and recreation activities.

Parks and Recreation Inventory

Parks

State

- S1 - Greenwell State Park
- S2 - Newtowne Neck State Park
- S3 - Point Lookout State Park
- S4 - St. Clement's Island State Park
- S5 - St. Mary's River State Park

Regional

- R1 - Chancellor's Run
- R2 - Chaptico Park
- R3 - Myrtle Point Park

Community

- C1 - Beavan Property
- C2 - Cardinal Gibbons Park
- C3 - Cecil Park
- C4 - Fifth District Park
- C5 - Hollywood Soccer Complex
- C6 - John G. Lancaster Park
- C7 - John V. Baggett Park
- C8 - Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- C9 - Nicolet Park
- C10 - Robert Miedzinski Park
- C11 - Seventh District Park
- C12 - Snow Hill Park

Neighborhood

- N1 - Country Lakes Park
- N2 - Jarboesville Park
- N3 - Laurel Ridge Park
- N4 - Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 - St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 - St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 - Town Creek Park
- N8 - Tubman Douglas Field
- N9 - Wildewood Recreation Area

Public School Recreation Areas

- E1 - Banneker ES
- E2 - Carver Heights Community Park & Rec Center
- E3 - Chopticon HS
- E4 - College of Southern Maryland
- E5 - Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 - Dynard ES
- E7 - Esperanza MS
- E8 - Evergreen ES
- E9 - Great Mills HS
- E10 - Green Holly ES
- E11 - Greenview Knolls ES
- E12 - GW Carver ES
- E13 - Hollywood ES
- E14 - Hollywood Rec. Center & Field

- E29 - Town Creek ES

- E30 - WF Duke ES

- E31 - White Marsh ES

Sports Complex

- B1 - Great Mills Pool

Special Use Areas

- U1 - Abell's Wharf
- U2 - Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- U3 - Bushwood Wharf
- U4 - Camp Calvert Landing
- U5 - Chaptico Wharf
- U6 - Clarke's Landing
- U7 - Dennison Property
- U8 - Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County
- U9 - Forest Landing
- U10 - Fox Harbor Landing
- U11 - Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch
- U12 - Indian Bridge Road Watershed
- U13 - Leonardtown Wharf Park
- U14 - Murry Road Waterfront Area
- U15 - Patuxent River Naval Air Station -Webster Field
- U16 - Paul Ellis Landing
- U17 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park
- U18 - Piney Point Landing
- U19 - Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- U20 - River Springs Landing
- U21 - St. George's Island Landing
- U22 - St. Georges Park
- U23 - St. Inigoes Landing
- U24 - St. Mary's Gymnastics Center
- U25 - Tall Timbers Landing
- U27 - Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- U28 - Wicomico Shores Landing

Historical/Cultural

- H1 - Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
- H2 - Historic St. Mary's City
- H3 - Old Jail Museum
- H4 - Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- H5 - Sotterley Plantation
- H6 - St. Clement's Island Museum
- H7 - Tudor Hall Information Center

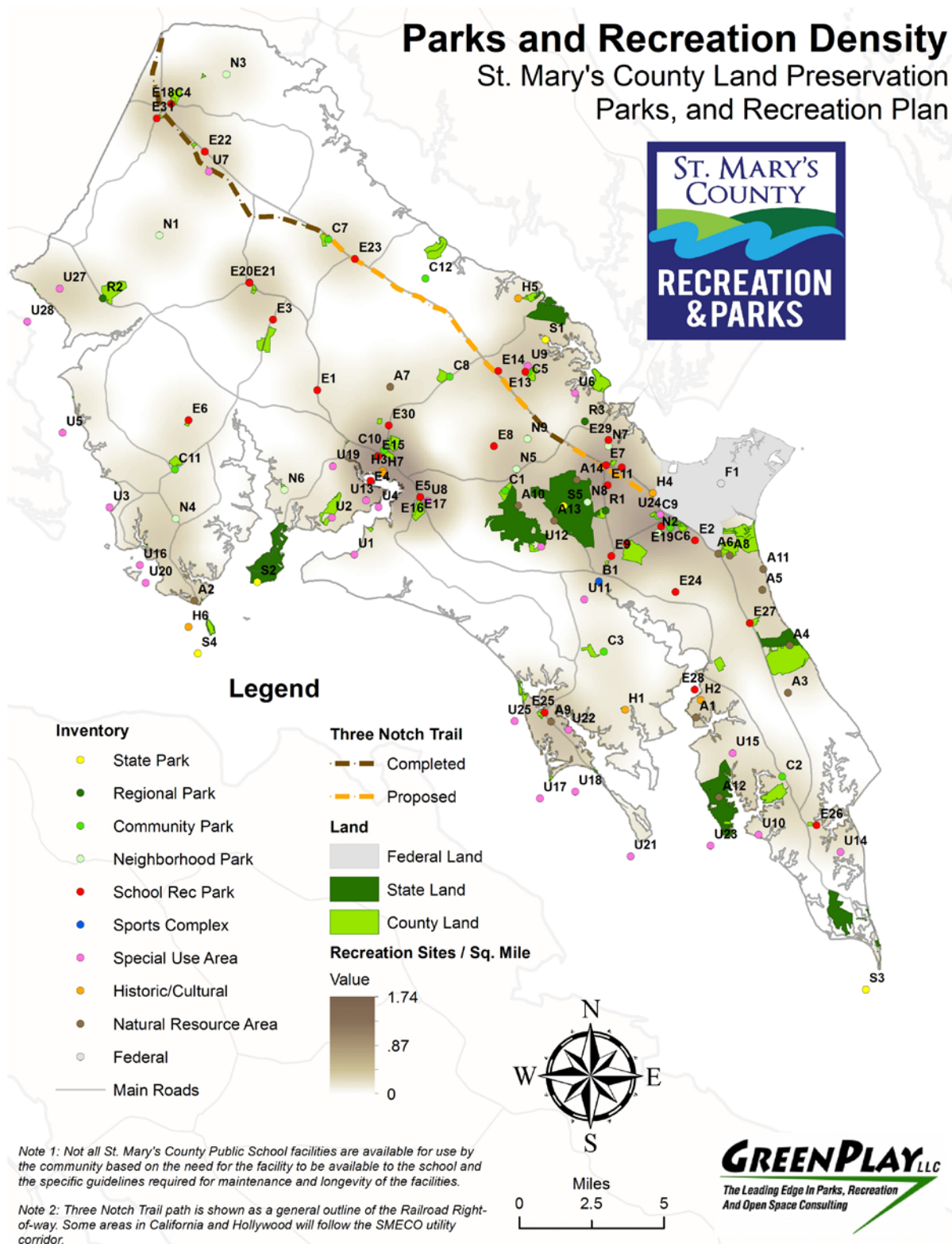
Natural Resource Area

- A1 - Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A2 - Coltons Point Park
- A3 - Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 - Elms Property
- A5 - Facchina Property
- A6 - Fenwick Property
- A7 - McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area

E15 - Leonardtown ES/Park
E16 - Leonardtown HS
E17 - Leonardtown MS
E18 - Lettie Marshall Dent ES
E19 - Lexington Park ES
E20 - Margaret Brent MS
E21 - Margaret Brent Recreation Center
E22 - Mechanicsville ES
E23 - Oakville ES
E24 - Park Hall ES
E25 - Piney Point ES
E26 - Ridge ES/Park
E27 - Spring Ridge MS
E28 - St. Mary's College of Maryland

A8 - Palm Property
A9 - Piney Point Aquaculture Center
A10 - Salem State Forest
A11 - Shannon Farm Park
A12 - St. Inigoes State Forest
A13 - St. Mary's River Conservation Land
A14 - St. Mary's River State Park - Wildlands Area
Federal
F1 - Patuxent River Naval Air Station

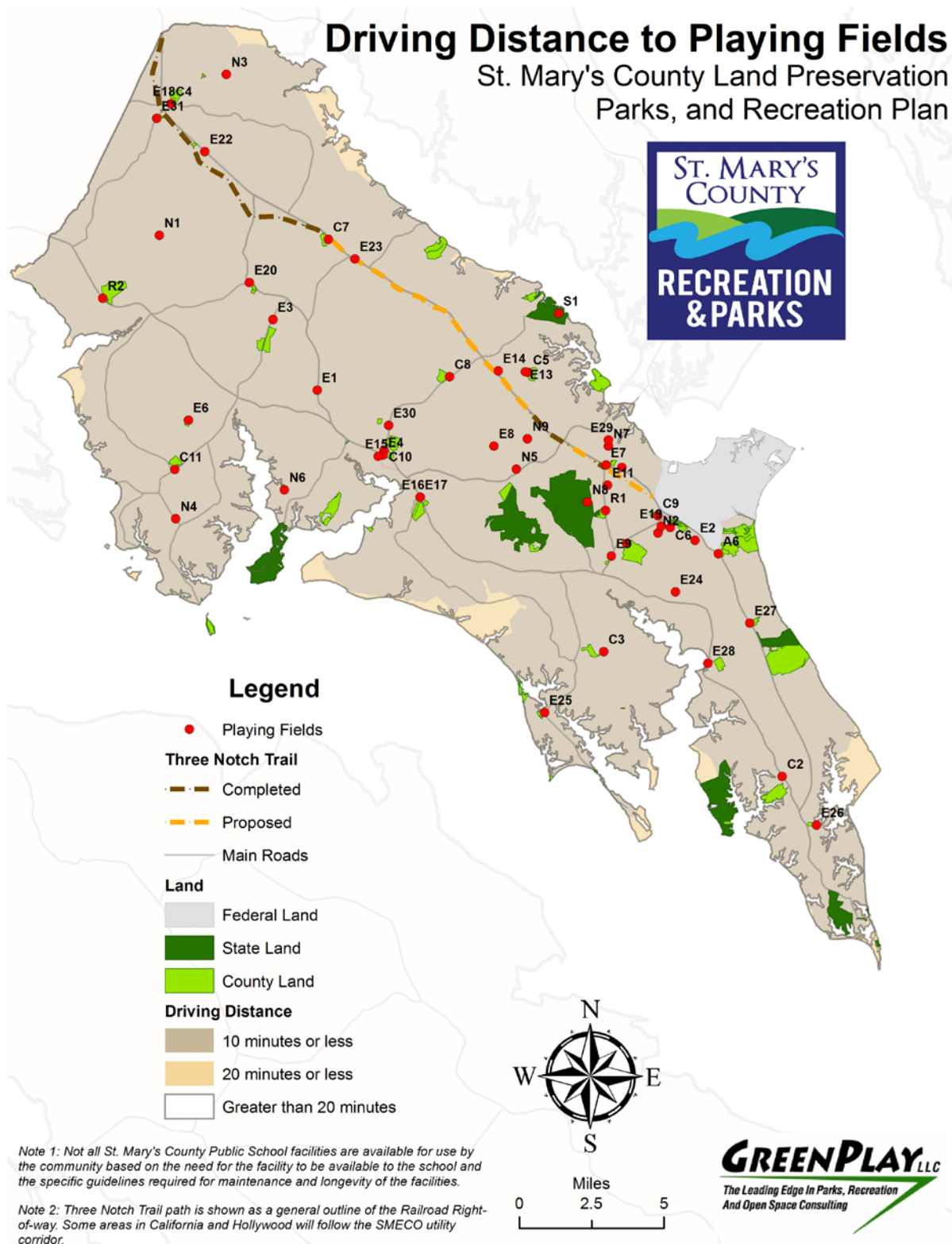
Map 5: Residential/Population Density



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

To gauge where residents of St. Mary's County live, **Map 5** illustrates the density of existing residential development. Darker shades represent denser development and shows the highest concentration of residential development concentrated in and around Charlotte Hall, California, Lexington Park, and Leonardtown. As previously illustrated on **Map 3**, these higher density residential areas also included a higher concentration of existing parks and recreation amenities available for the public.

Map 6: Driving Distance to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Playing Fields



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 6 illustrates drive-time distances to County-managed parks and recreation properties and public schools that include playing fields for sports and athletic activities. From nearly any point in the County, there is at least one County park or recreation site with athletic fields within a ten-minute drive. Sites with athletic and sports playing fields included:

Sites with Playing Fields

Parks

State

S1 - Greenwell State Park

Regional

R1 - Chancellor's Run

R2 - Chaptico Park

Community

C2 - Cardinal Gibbons Park

C3 - Cecil Park

C4 - Fifth District Park

C5 - Hollywood Soccer Complex

C6 - John G. Lancaster Park

C7 - John V. Baggett Park

C8 - Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park

C9 - Nicolet Park

C10 - Robert Miedzinski Park

C11 - Seventh District Park

Neighborhood

N1 - Country Lakes Park

N2 - Jarboesville Park

N3 - Laurel Ridge Park

N4 - Seventh District Optimist Park

N5 - St. Andrews Estate Park

N6 - St. Clements Shores Park

N7 - Town Creek Park

N8 - Tubman Douglas Field

N9 - Wildewood Recreation Area

Public School Recreation Areas

E1 - Banneker ES

E2 - Carver Heights Community Park & Rec Center

E3 - Chopticon HS

E4 - College of Southern Maryland

E6 - Dynard ES

E7 - Esperanza MS

E8 - Evergreen ES

E9 - Great Mills HS

E10 - Green Holly ES

E11 - Greenview Knolls ES

E12 - GW Carver ES

E13 - Hollywood ES

E14 - Hollywood Rec. Center & Field

E15 - Leonardtown ES/Park

E16 - Leonardtown HS

E17 - Leonardtown MS

E18 - Lettie Marshall Dent ES

E19 - Lexington Park ES

E20 - Margaret Brent MS

E22 - Mechanicsville ES

E23 - Oakville ES

E24 - Park Hall ES

E25 - Piney Point ES

E26 - Ridge ES/Park

E27 - Spring Ridge MS

E28 - St. Mary's College of Maryland

E29 - Town Creek ES

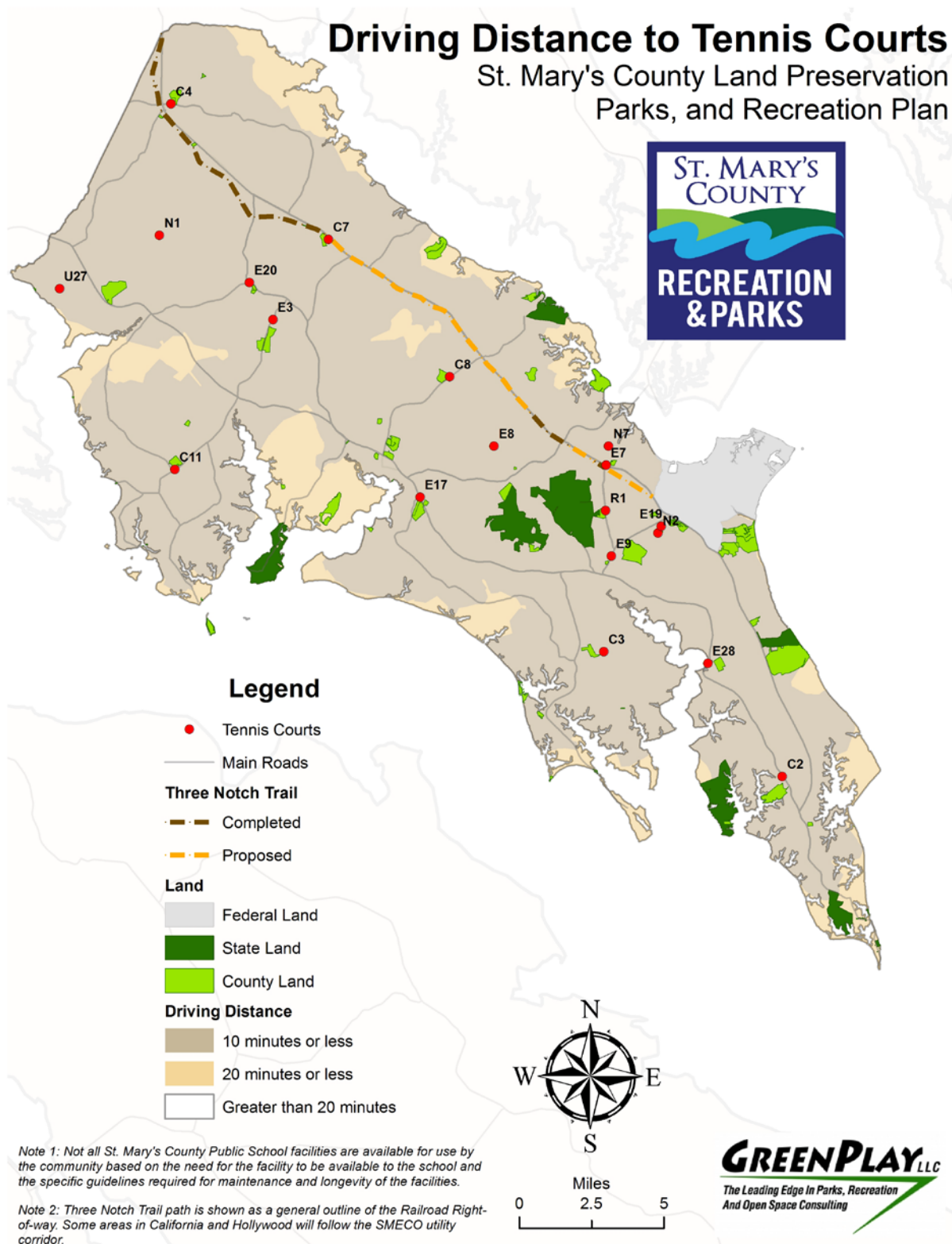
E30 - WF Duke ES

E31 - White Marsh ES

Natural Resource Area

A6 - Fenwick Property

Map 7: Driving Distance to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Tennis Courts



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 7 illustrates driving distances to public parks and recreation sites with tennis courts. The majority of areas in the county are within a ten-minute drive or less of one of these sites, and all areas of the County area within a twenty-minute drive of at least one Recreation and Parks site with tennis courts. Sites with tennis court facilities included:

Sites with Tennis Courts

Parks

Regional

R1 - Chancellor's Run

Community

C2 - Cardinal Gibbons Park

C3 - Cecil Park

C4 - Fifth District Park

C7 - John V. Baggett Park

C8 - Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park

C11 - Seventh District Park

Neighborhood

N1 - Country Lakes Park

N2 - Jarboesville Park

N7 - Town Creek Park

Public School Recreation Areas

E3 - Chopticon HS

E7 - Esperanza MS

E8 - Evergreen ES

E9 - Great Mills HS

E17 - Leonardtown MS

E19 - Lexington Park ES

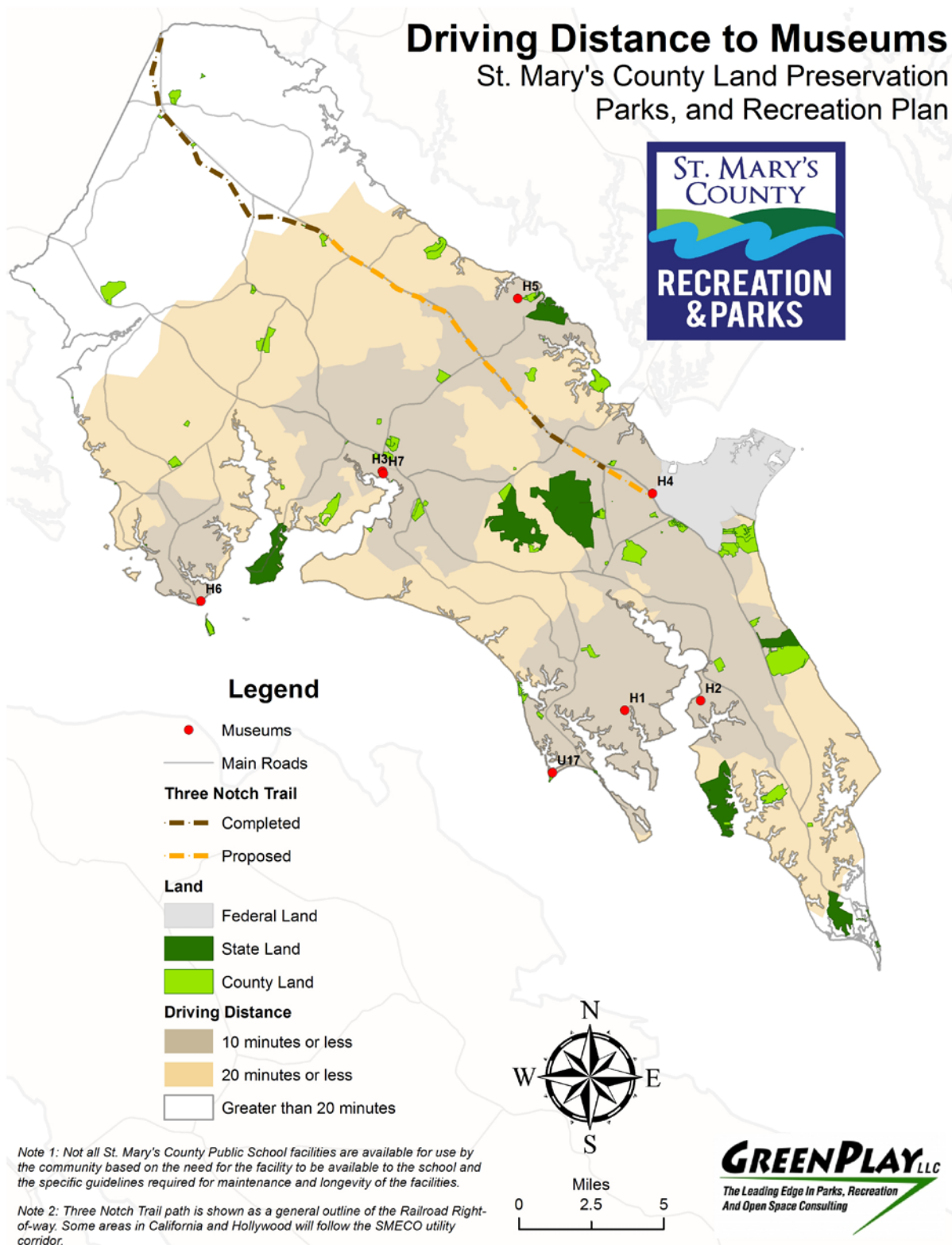
E20 - Margaret Brent MS

E28 - St. Mary's College of Maryland

Special Use Areas

U27 - Wicomico Shores Golf Course

Map 8: Driving Distance to Public Museums and Historic Sites



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 8 shows that the majority of the central county region is within a relatively short drive of a museum site. However, the northern portion of St. Mary's County noticeably lacks public museums or historic sites. Museums, cultural attractions, and associated recreation amenities included:

Museum Sites Inventory

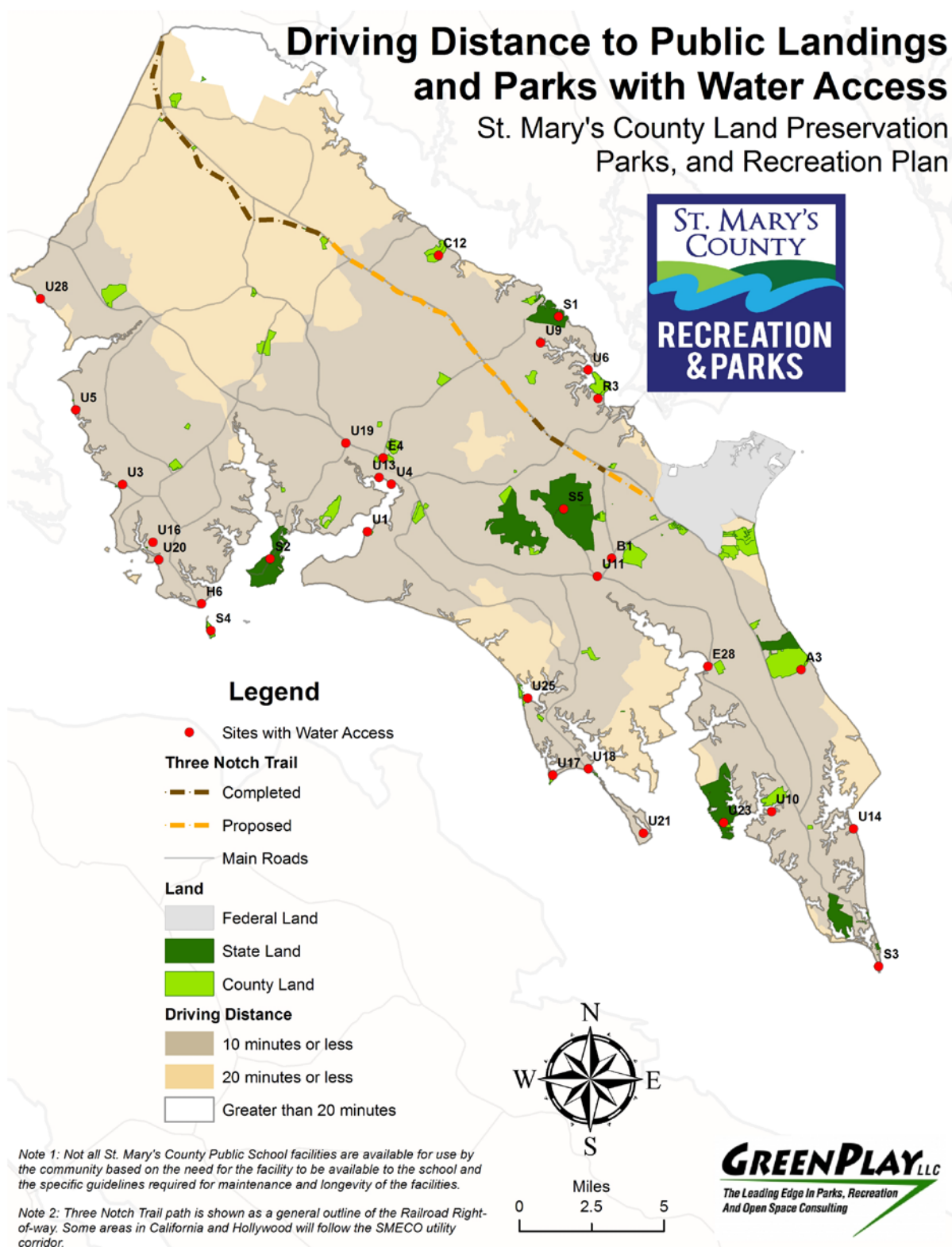
Historical/Cultural

- H1 - Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
- H2 - Historic St. Mary's City
- H3 - Old Jail Museum
- H4 - Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- H5 - Sotterley Plantation
- H6 - St. Clement's Island Museum
- H7 - Tudor Hall Information Center

Special Use Areas

- U17 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park

Map 9: Driving Distance to Public Landings and Parks with Water Access



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 9 illustrates that there is relatively good access to public landings and parks with water access on the Potomac River on the County’s western shores. Additionally, most areas in the southernmost portion of the County are within a ten-minute drive of at least one public landing. The recent opening of the 163 acre Snow Hill Park in July 2017 was a major achievement toward fulfilling a long standing need for additional public access to the Patuxent River. The addition of this site greatly improved public water access in the northeastern corner of the County. Although **Map 9** illustrates a gap in service for public water access (areas further than a 20 minute drive from a water access site) in the northeastern corner of St. Mary’s County, additional public water access sites in neighboring Charles and Calvert Counties are located within a 20 minute drive of this area (including Gilbert Run Park, Benedict canoe/kayak launch, and Hallowing Point). Sites that provided public landings and water access in St. Mary’s County included:

Sites with Public Landings and Parks with Water Access

Parks

State

S1 - Greenwell State Park
 S2 - Newtowne Neck State Park
 S3 - Point Lookout State Park
 S4 - St. Clement’s Island State Park
 S5 - St. Mary’s River State Park

Regional

R3 - Myrtle Point Park

Community

C12 - Snow Hill Park

U18 - Piney Point Landing

U19 - Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery

U20 - River Springs Landing

U21 - St. George’s Island Landing

U23 - St. Inigoes Landing

U25 - Tall Timbers Landing

U28 - Wicomico Shores Landing

Natural Resource Area

A3 - Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center

Public School Recreation Areas

E4 - College of Southern Maryland
 E28 - St. Mary’s College of Maryland

Historical/Cultural

H6 - St. Clement’s Island Museum

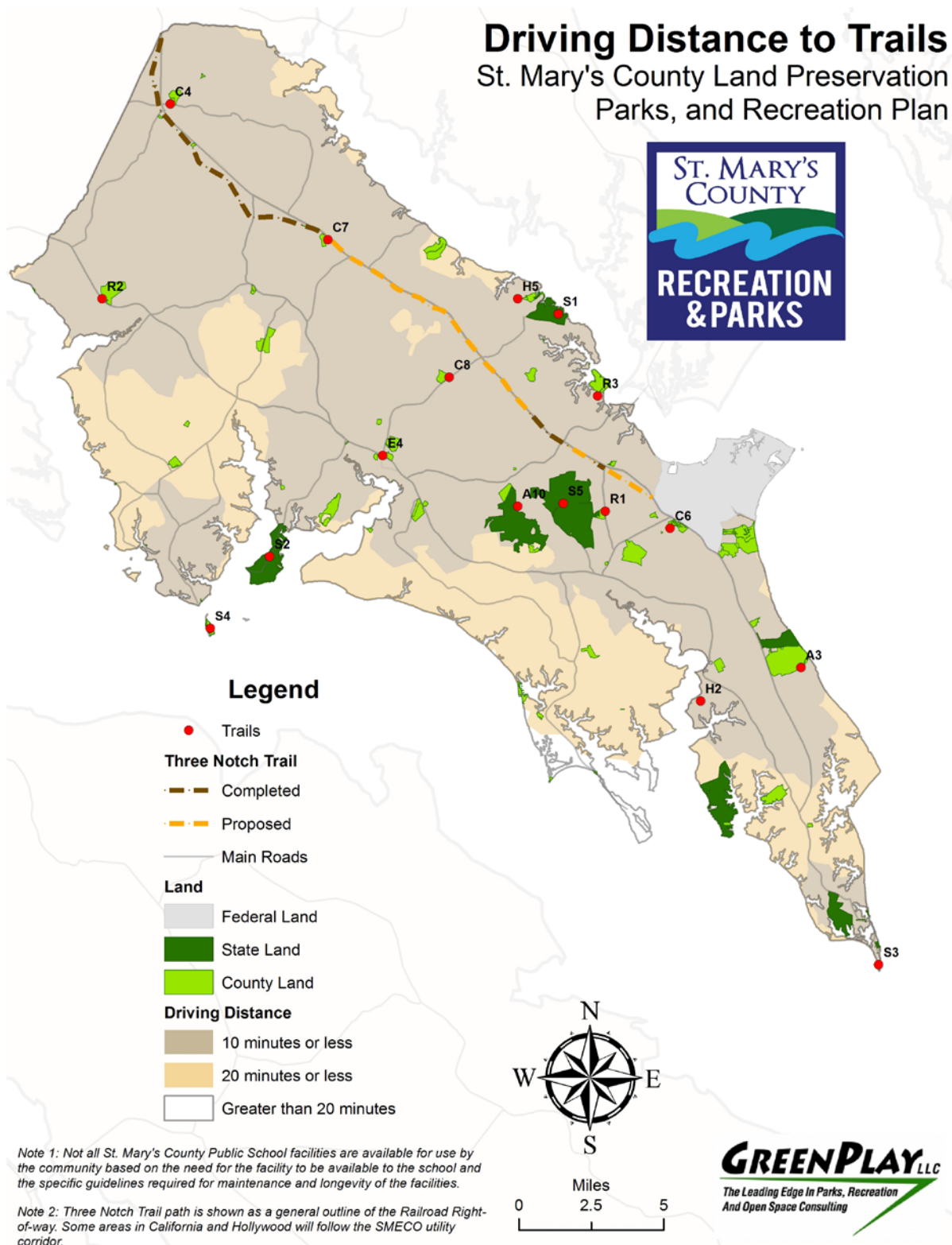
Sports Complex

B1 - Great Mills Pool

Special Use Areas

U1 - Abell’s Wharf
 U3 - Bushwood Wharf
 U4 - Camp Calvert Landing
 U5 - Chaptico Wharf
 U6 - Clarke’s Landing
 U9 - Forest Landing
 U10 - Fox Harbor Landing
 U11 - Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch
 U13 - Leonardtown Wharf Park
 U16 - Paul Ellis Landing
 U17 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park

Map 10: Driving Distance to Sites with Trails



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Map 10 illustrates parks and open space locations with developed trail systems for public use. Sites with trails are noticeably more limited along the county's western shoreline. The Three Notch Trail is St. Mary's County's most prominent trail and is being constructed on the County-owned Railroad Right-of-Way. When fully constructed the Trail will provide a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle corridor that will link local places where people live, work, shop, and play. As of 2017, approximately 11 miles of the trail were constructed, the majority in the northern portion of the county. Sites in the county with designated trails included:

Sites with Trails Inventory

Parks

State

- S1 - Greenwell State Park
- S2 - Newtowne Neck State Park
- S3 - Point Lookout State Park
- S4 - St. Clement's Island State Park
- S5 - St. Mary's River State Park

Regional

- R1 - Chancellor's Run
- R2 - Chaptico Park
- R3 - Myrtle Point Park

Community

- C4 - Fifth District Park
- C6 - John G. Lancaster Park
- C7 - John V. Baggett Park
- C8 - Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park

Public School Recreation Areas

- E4 - College of Southern Maryland

Historic/Cultural

- H2 - Historic St. Mary's City
- H5 - Sotterly Plantation

Natural Resource Area

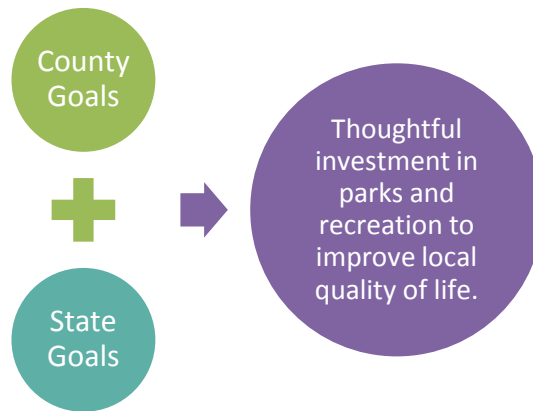
- A3 - Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A10 - Salem State Forest

Summary of Findings from All Level of Service Review Components

In general, St. Mary's County appears to be well served by its existing system of public parks, recreation, museum, and open space amenities. In reviewing all components of this level of service analysis, County-managed facilities and programs are well utilized, but are at a point where existing demand for some facilities and services exceeds current capacity. The general condition of most facilities and programs appears to meet user needs satisfactorily, but staff and the public are aware of, and see a need for, renovation or replacement of aged facilities, increasing opportunities for field and court sports, and better ensuring consistent playability of athletic fields. The expansion of trails, open spaces, athletic fields, and water access, as well as associated recreational opportunities are improvements universally desired by participants of this planning process. Such enhancements would also be supportive of overall State and County land preservation, recreation, tourism, and economic development goals and initiatives. Since 2012, the County was successful in completing major projects to enhance recreation opportunities for the public including completing Phase VI of the Three Notch Trail construction, and acquisition of Snow Hill Park and Shannon Farm properties. The addition of these two properties to the inventory of public parks and open spaces satisfies St. Mary's County short-term land acquisition goal for parks and recreation. Opened to the public in 2017, Snow Hill Farm significantly improves public water access opportunities in the northeastern portion of the County. Based on a sum of all findings, the highest priority areas to target for improvement or attention consist of:

- Meeting existing needs and expectations.
- Improving access to athletic fields with consistent, good quality surface playing conditions.
- Improving and expanding comfort and safety infrastructure at parks at recreation sites.
- Enhancing and expanding water access and waterfront recreation facilities remains a priority. The waterfront recreation opportunities opened at Snow Hill Park in July 2017 provide improved public access to the Patuxent River waterfront. Further amenities at the site will be planned through a master planning process.
- Completing the Three Notch Trail and establishing a connected network of trails.
- Rehabilitation and/or renovation of existing recreation program facilities.
- Development of a new large-scale recreation complex in a central location within the County. Such a facility should include multiple athletic fields and associated infrastructure capable of supporting league/tournament play for field based sports.
- Development a large, multiple use recreation/community center at Nicolet Park or another feasible location (respondents expressed desire for central location) within the County. Such a facility should provide indoor recreation amenities including multiple sport courts for basketball, tennis, and pickleball.
- Forging strong, collaborative relationships between all County agencies actively involved in tourism planning and marketing.

Goals and recommendations developed in this Plan for enhancing the County's system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces relied heavily on the overall findings of the level of service analysis.



E. Goals and Recommendations

Both St. Mary's County and the State of Maryland have established goals or objectives for enhancing public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces for the benefit of the public. Goals for the County are established by the current County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2010. Chapter 10, Section 2.D. of the Comprehensive Plan includes the County's objective and two supporting guiding policies for parks and recreation:

- **Objective:** Create new and enhanced parks and recreation facilities that link existing parks and communities to provide expanded recreational opportunities while preserving environmental, aesthetic, and cultural quality.
- **Policy:** Guide the periodic preparation of a land preservation, parks, and recreation plan.
- **Policy:** Meet the existing and future demands for recreation and parks through state, local, and privately managed facilities that are consistent with the purposes of this plan.

Statewide Goals for Parks and Recreation

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, play, and visit.
- Use state investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

Over the past five years, the County has made significant progress in moving toward achieving goals established in the 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. Major land acquisition and park and recreation facility enhancement projects completed toward achieving the goals of the 2012 plan included:

- Park and open space land acquisitions:
 - Addition of 200+ acre Shannon Farm property and expansion of acreage at existing park sites.
 - The 2017 acquisition of the Snow Hill Park farm tract on the Patuxent River was a major achievement, and satisfied two goals of County's 2017 capital improvement program – the acquisition of land for a "Patuxent River Waterfront Park" and "Central Patuxent Public Landing." Limited public water access at Snow Hill Park was opened in July 2017.
- Recreation and park facility enhancements:
 - Completion of Phase VI of the Three Notch Trail construction
 - Piney Point Lighthouse Museum renovations
 - Restroom renovations at multiple park sites
 - New comfort facility at Wicomico Shores Landing
 - New athletic field construction at Charlotte Hall
 - U.S. Colored Troops Memorial Interpretive Center renovation

The 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan provides a prioritized series of goals for maintaining and enhancing the system of County parks, recreation, museum, and open space amenities, and provides a corresponding series of actionable recommendations for implementation over the next five years and into the future. Goals of this Plan are supportive of park and recreation objectives of both the State of Maryland, and St. Mary's County, and if followed, are designed to assist the County in making tangible improvements to its system of parks, recreation, museum, and open space assets, from which so much of the County's character and residents' quality of life is tied.

The Department of Recreation and Parks is the primary agency responsible for the planning, management, and enhancement of the County's parks, recreation, museum, and open space system. As the four goals for parks and recreation included in this Plan indicate, the County should continue to maintain its existing comprehensive approach to enhancing its system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces through strategic investment in new facility development, and enhancement of existing assets and programs. Significant investment in land acquisitions since 2012, including the Snow Hill Park Farm, and Shannon Farm properties, have satisfied the County's short term land acquisition goals and provided land holdings sufficient to support the development of new recreation amenities required to meet current and projected local needs.

Goal 1: Expand the inventory of County managed athletic fields and sport courts, and enhance the condition of current fields and courts to improve consistency in the playability of field surfaces.

Recommendations:

- Regularly seek to acquire land suitable for the development and long-term operation and maintenance of new athletic fields and associated site facilities.
- Investigate surfacing treatments, field management strategies, and other best practices to assess how the County may improve the durability and long-term playability of its existing inventory of athletic fields.

- Continue to work hands-on with sports leagues, programs, and groups that utilize, or would like to utilize, County athletic fields to efficiently, and equitably plan and permit for their use, and in a manner that allows for necessary management of facilities needed to maintain safe, playable conditions.
- Investigate the potential to develop a large athletic field complex as an independent facility, or as part of the development of a large community/recreation complex in centralized location within the County.
- Develop a large, outdoor sports complex in a central location within the County. Such a facility should include multiple athletic fields and associated infrastructure capable of supporting league/tournament play for field based sports.
- Develop a large, multiple use recreation/community center at Nicolet Park or at a centralized location within the County. Such a facility should provide indoor recreation amenities including multiple sport courts for basketball, tennis, and pickleball.

Goal 2: Expand opportunities for water access and waterfront recreation throughout the County.

Recommendations:

- Regularly seek to acquire land suitable for the development of public water access facilities, and water-based recreation opportunities at the Patuxent River (priority focus area), Chesapeake Bay (secondary focus area), and Potomac River (third priority). Move forward with the development of waterfront recreation amenities at the new Snow Hill Park to expand public water access to the Patuxent River.
- Review existing access constraints and determine the carrying capacity of all County public landings and water-based recreation facilities for key activities such as boat launching and associated trailer parking, canoe/kayak launching and associated parking, fishing, swimming, etc. Determine and prioritize enhancements to facilities where reasonable and feasible access and carrying capacity improvements should be considered.
- Collaborate with State, County, and local partners to better inform the public of the total inventory of public landings and facilities for water-based recreation throughout the County.

Goal 3: Create a network of connected walkways, trails, and paths throughout the County.

Recommendations:

- Complete the Three Notch Trail.
- Investigate the potential to use trail counters to collect data on the Three Notch Trail.
- Repair and enhance the trails/old streets in the Lancaster Park south and north parcels (old “Flat Tops” housing area) for hiking, biking, walking, and roller blading and for Arts in the Parks events.
- Inventory and map all existing trails, trail heads, trail parking, and other associated trail facilities on County lands using GPS/GIS criteria consistent with County Land Use and Growth Management mapping criteria.
- Expand engagement and develop partnerships with local trail user groups to develop mutually beneficial stewardship objectives and action plans (i.e. Friends of the Three Notch Trail).
- Consider the development of a countywide bicycling and pedestrian master plan, and associated steering committee, to guide the development of a connected and sustainable trails network.
- Continue to partner and participate in regional and statewide initiatives and programs for enhancing pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the County, and improving connectivity between trails and bike paths locally, and with neighboring counties.

Goal 4: Continue to operate, maintain, and improve existing County parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces in an efficient and cost effective manner for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Recommendations:

- As new facilities, programs, or responsibilities develop, adequate resources must be provided to best ensure the effective, safe, and efficient management of any development project, maintenance responsibility, or operational need.
- Regularly target investment to renovate, remove, or replace facilities and amenities that are no longer functioning properly or safely or are at the end of the serviceable life. Examples of facilities commonly in need of renovation or replacement throughout any parks and recreation system include restrooms; lighting/security systems; parking facilities; fencing; minor drainage improvements; playgrounds; and small buildings, sheds, or support structures.
- Continue to evaluate athletic field surfacing options for future renovation, replacement, or construction of athletic fields.
- Continue to coordinate with County Economic Development and Tourism staff to determine the potential future budget, management, and operations considerations as the County works to implement tourism related programs and marketing strategies.
- Assess potential facility renovation and exhibit updates at the St. Clement's Island Museum.
- Implement the development of new park and recreation facilities at Myrtle Point Park in accordance with the approved master plan. Similar recommendation for Elms Beach Park.
- Develop a large, outdoor sports complex in a central location within the County. Such a facility should include multiple athletic fields and associated infrastructure capable of supporting league/tournament play for field based sports.
- Develop a large, multiple use recreation/community center at Nicolet Park or a centralized location within the County. Such a facility should provide indoor recreation amenities including multiple sport courts for basketball, tennis, and pickleball.
- Assess the potential for necessary facility renovations at the County-owned and operated Wicomico Shores Golf Course. Facility improvements that have been noted by the Golf Advisory Board include: asphalt overlay on cart paths; sand trap drainage and rehabilitation; and continued greens and grounds enhancements.

As detailed in **Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations**, the Department of Recreation and Parks has developed a capital improvement program that strategically targets investment over the short, mid, and long range to enhance and expand recreational opportunities throughout the County in a realistic, and achievable manner. As St. Mary's County has satisfied short term land acquisition needs, the recommendations of the Plan focus on the development of site and facilities improvements, including the major, on-going construction of the Three Notch Trail, as well as a series of proposed large and small enhancements for water access, sports and recreation facilities, and museums.

IV. Natural Resource Land Conservation

A. Introduction and Overview of St. Mary's County Conserved Natural Resource Lands

Natural resource lands contain the forests, wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers, and other sensitive natural features that help define the rural character of St. Mary's County, and provide ecosystem services that benefit the population. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identifies the protection of forest resources, sensitive natural lands, and the stewardship of watersheds and waterfront lands as significant to the County.

Natural resource lands provide significant benefits including defining rural character, maintaining the attractiveness of existing developed areas, providing wildlife habitat, natural filtration systems for pollutants, and opportunities for resource-based recreational pursuits. They form the natural framework around which the built environment is planned and developed. In return, natural resource lands require few government services to operate, yet they serve needed functions. Publicly accessible natural resource areas also create opportunities for eco-tourism, and direct interaction between people and the natural environment. St. Mary's County's abundance of natural resource lands are places where the, "bonds between people and the natural world create a pattern of connectedness."²

Benefits of Natural Resource Lands in St. Mary's County:

- *Ecosystem services filter air and water and support biodiversity*
- *Outdoor recreation opportunities*
- *Natural resource-based industries*
- *Community character*
- *Conservation of Chesapeake Bay*

Since 2012 St. Mary's County has preserved:

- *652 acres through Transfer of Development Rights*
- *257 acres through MD Historical and Environmental Trusts*

A new focus of natural resources conservation is the role such conservation must play if the County is to successfully develop and implement the federally mandated Phase II and Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans. This is required by the Clean Water Act in order to meet the Chesapeake Bay "Total maximum daily load" (TMDL) requirements developed for nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment pollutants in the watershed. Conservation of natural filters (forest, floodplains, and wetlands) and the

management of development to reduce pollutant loads are the most cost-effective means to meet the TMDL. St. Mary's County has not yet passed the tipping point for meeting the TMDL primarily through resource management, conservation to prevent degradation, and through habitat enhancement and storm water management retrofit projects to halt increased degradation and allow downstream natural systems to recover.

² Management Plan for Hilton Run, by Citizens of St. Mary's County and the Hilton Run Team. 2003

B. Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

The following section discusses the interrelationship between the State's and County's goals for natural resource conservation and describes the rationale behind County goals.

State Goals

The State's goals for conservation of natural resource lands are found in **Appendix A**. As described below, St. Mary's County's goals are consistent with, and supportive of, Maryland's statewide goals for natural resource land conservation.

County Goals

St. Mary's County's Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for the County's natural resource conservation goals and strategies. These

goals in turn form the basis for policies, regulations, and implementation programs. Together, each contributes to implementing a comprehensive strategy of natural resource conservation that is compatible with the State's goals.

"Preserve and enhance the quality of life by recognizing and protecting the unique character of St. Mary's County as a rural Chesapeake Bay peninsula."

County Comprehensive Plan's vision statement excerpt

At a 1994 community character workshop, the County solicited citizen input for updating the Comprehensive Plan. Citizens favored the concept of designing development around the natural environment through use of clustering, agricultural overlay zones or an Amish overlay zone, and through conservation of sensitive environmental areas. Citizens also favored providing open space linkages, greenways, and additional public water access points. At Comprehensive Plan update meetings in 1996, and through an associated citizen survey, it was determined that residents favored maintaining rural character, clustering growth, minimizing the breakup of farmland and open space, and implementing a transferable development rights program (TDR). These citizen opinions have guided the vision and goals for natural resource land conservation in subsequent updates of the County's Comprehensive Plans. The County's goals also support Maryland's 12 planning visions adopted in 2009. The 2010 County Comprehensive Plan's land use concept emphasizes resource protection as one of its major policy areas. The County's Visions for Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation are:

- **Environmental protection:** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
 - Land and natural features important to maintaining the environmental health of the County, which present constraints for development, and which are critical to reducing damage to the Chesapeake Bay, are preserved from disturbance and enhanced to increase the effectiveness of their benefits for erosion control, filtering of sediments and nutrients, and provision of essential habitat for wildlife.
 - In return, citizens receive the benefits of reduced construction costs, minimization of erosion and flood events, improved water quality for drinking and recreation, and increased property values from a more scenic living environment.

- **Resource conservation:** Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved.
 - Farms and forest resources are preserved from urban or suburban encroachment, and the rural character and attributes of the County are maintained and enhanced. Landowner equity and property values have been enhanced by an active program of purchase and transfer of development rights.
 - Protection of the rural countryside and traditional economies and activities (fishing, farming, and forestry) are recognized as important components of the community and the County's rural character. This rural character is worth maintaining not only for its scenic beauty, but also because of its attraction as a setting for technology and service industries, which are concentrated near Naval Air Station Patuxent River.
 - A coordinated cross-County network of greenways and scenic easements is established, and waterfront access is enhanced to provide for passive and active recreation and a heightened natural environment.
 - Large contiguous tracts of sensitive areas are outside of designated growth areas and zoned for rural or resource protection. Specifically, the McIntosh Run natural area is excluded from the Leonardtown development district, and the St. Mary's watershed natural area and lands westward thereof are excluded from the Lexington Park development district.

However, having defined a preferred future, the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan's Chapter II noted several issues to be addressed in order to achieve environmental protection and natural resource conservation including:

- Continued evaluation of the Annual Growth Policy (AGP), and periodic adjustments as needed to discourage excessive development of rural areas.
- Acquire environmentally sensitive areas and properties that may be used for passive recreational activities. Careful development of County-owned properties constrained by sensitive areas to provide for appropriate public passive recreational activities.
- Continue to identify and protect sensitive areas: streams and their buffers; 100-year floodplains; habitats of threatened and endangered species; and steep slopes, tidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), waterfowl areas, colonial bird nesting sites, shorelines, tidal and nontidal floodplains, nontidal wetlands and their buffers, anadromous fish spawning areas, groundwater, mineral resources, and wildlife corridors. Also, identify and protect agricultural land (green infrastructure gaps, buffers, open space, forest conservation mitigation) and forest lands (green infrastructure and forest interior dwelling species habitat) intended for resource protection and conservation as required by the state legislature.
- Consider hazard mitigation in the early stages of development and balance development goals with avoidance of known high-risk areas such as floodplains, coastal erosion zones, and areas of known high risk due to natural hazards.
- Work to increase understanding of the watershed resources, and the impacts on those resources that result from the activities of people who live, work and recreate in the watershed.
- Require when necessary, and promote when possible, the stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and the land and watershed resources by using:
 - Regulatory programs (Critical Area Program, forest conservation regulations, storm water regulations, requirements for open space conservation and clustering, etc.).

- Tax and funding incentive programs (Agricultural Districts, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Easements, a transfer of development rights program, installment purchase agreements, etc.).
- Planning programs (Breton Bay and St. Mary's Watershed Restoration Action Strategies).
- Continue to develop and implement ordinances and programs that adequately protect sensitive areas, to set and measure progress in meeting goals for preservation, to enforce limitations on the allowable loss of resources, and to ensure that mitigation for unavoidable impacts is the responsibility and duty of those who benefit from the impact.

C. County Conservation of Natural Resource Land

The following discusses major components of the County's implementation program for natural resources conservation.

Comprehensive Planning Context

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals establish the countywide framework and foundations for planning and regulatory functions related to integrating natural resources conservation and land use. The framework has four basic elements:

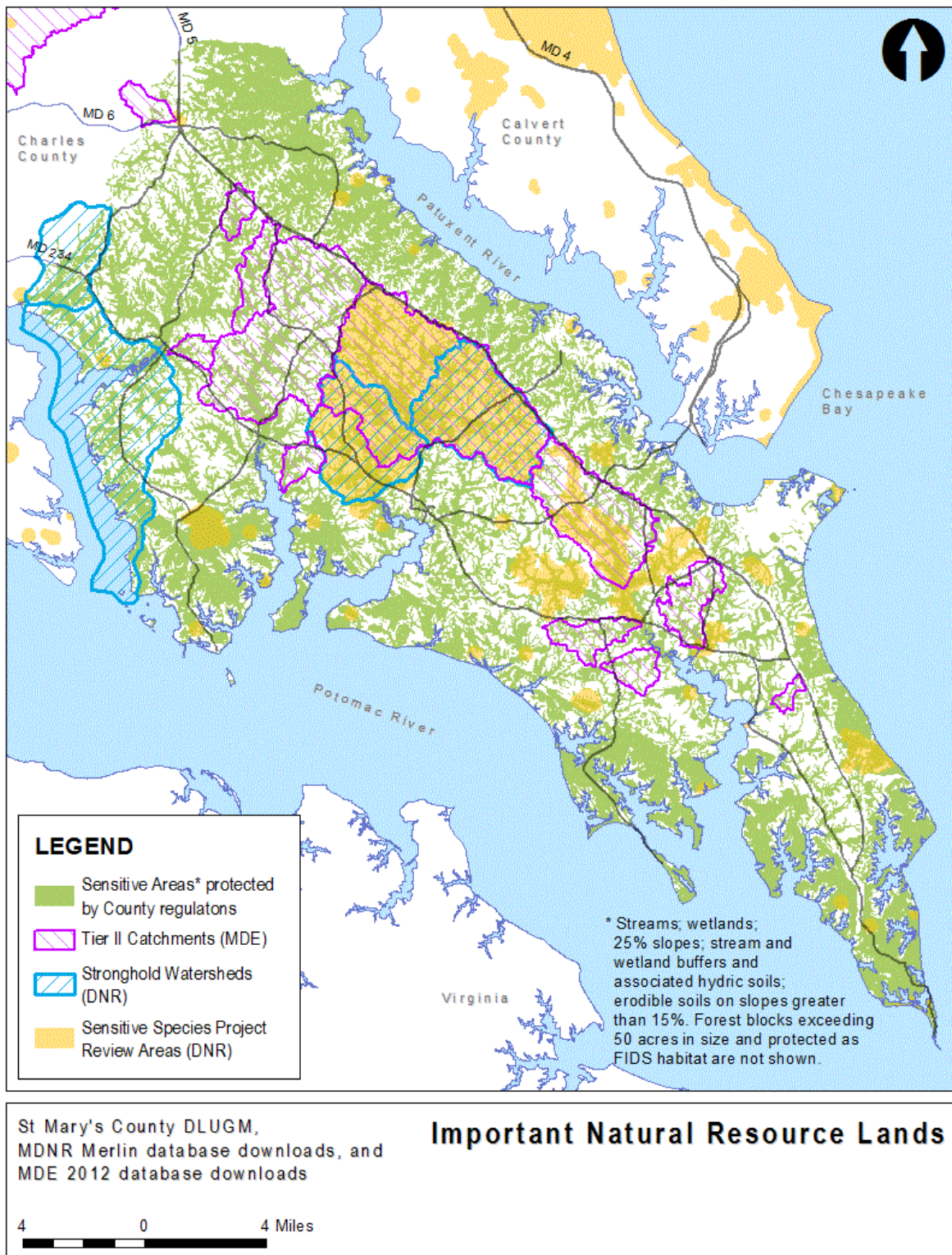
1. Concentrating development in designated development districts, town centers, and village centers.

Growth areas comprise about 20% of the County's land area, and concentrating development in these areas will limit the sprawl pattern of development into the County's rural areas. **Map 10** shows the primary areas where growth is directed – the two development districts of Lexington Park and the Town of Leonardtown (both priority funding areas [PFAs]), along with other County designated PFAs along MD Route 5 (Hollywood, Mechanicsville, New Market, and Charlotte Hall) and at Piney Point. These areas are designated receiving areas for transferred development rights (TDRs).

2. Preserving open space, scenic, and rural character.

The 177,100-acre Rural Preservation District (RPD) contains prime farm and timberlands and low-density non-farm residential developments. Rural areas are to be preserved from urban or suburban encroachment in order to maintain the County's rural character and attributes. The County's rural character is identified as important in attracting the service and technology industries that are located primarily in the Lexington Park Development District. Limited commercial and rural service centers are designated at major rural crossroads. Since 2007, each parcel in the RPD may be developed by right with a single dwelling (subject to meeting all other zoning criteria). A landowner wishing to create additional homes on an RPD parcel must purchase additional TDRs, or pay a fee-in-lieu of TDRs, as part of a proposal for the additional development.

Map 11: Important Natural Resource Lands



3. Protecting sensitive areas.

Map 11 shows natural resource lands in St. Mary's County protected by regulations. These lands contain sensitive areas (steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors, hydric soils, and natural habitats) where development would be detrimental or hazardous. These areas are designated sending areas for TDRs. **Map 11** also shows boundaries of areas where federal and state laws may impose in limits on development due to requirements for maintaining water quality and for protecting habitats

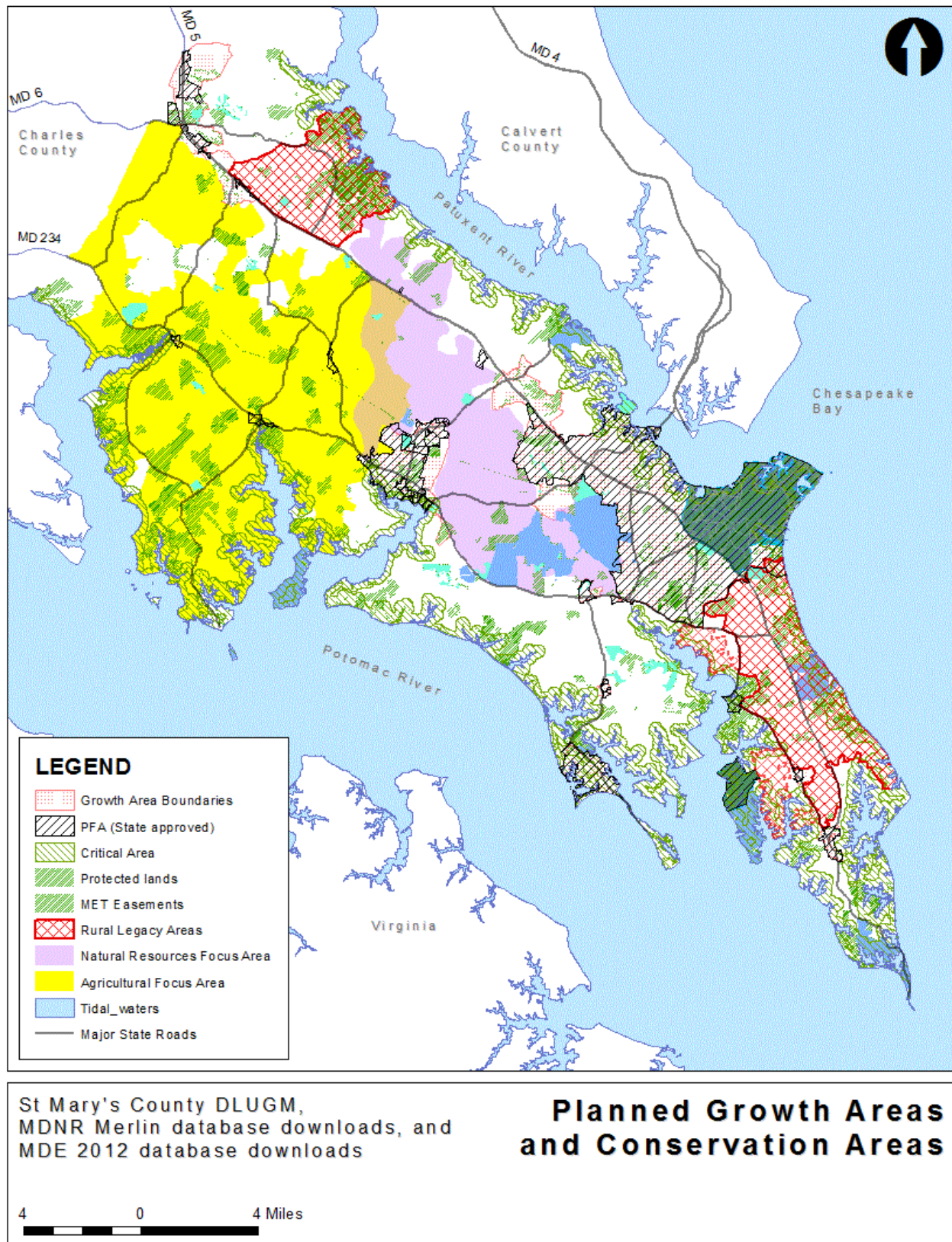
4. Preserving and conserving large contiguous natural areas.

The County has several large and contiguous areas that contain both sensitive natural features and important habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species (RTES). The five largest areas are:

- Portions of the St. Mary's River Watershed
- McIntosh Run Watershed
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area
- Huntersville Rural Legacy Area
- Mattapany Rural Legacy Area

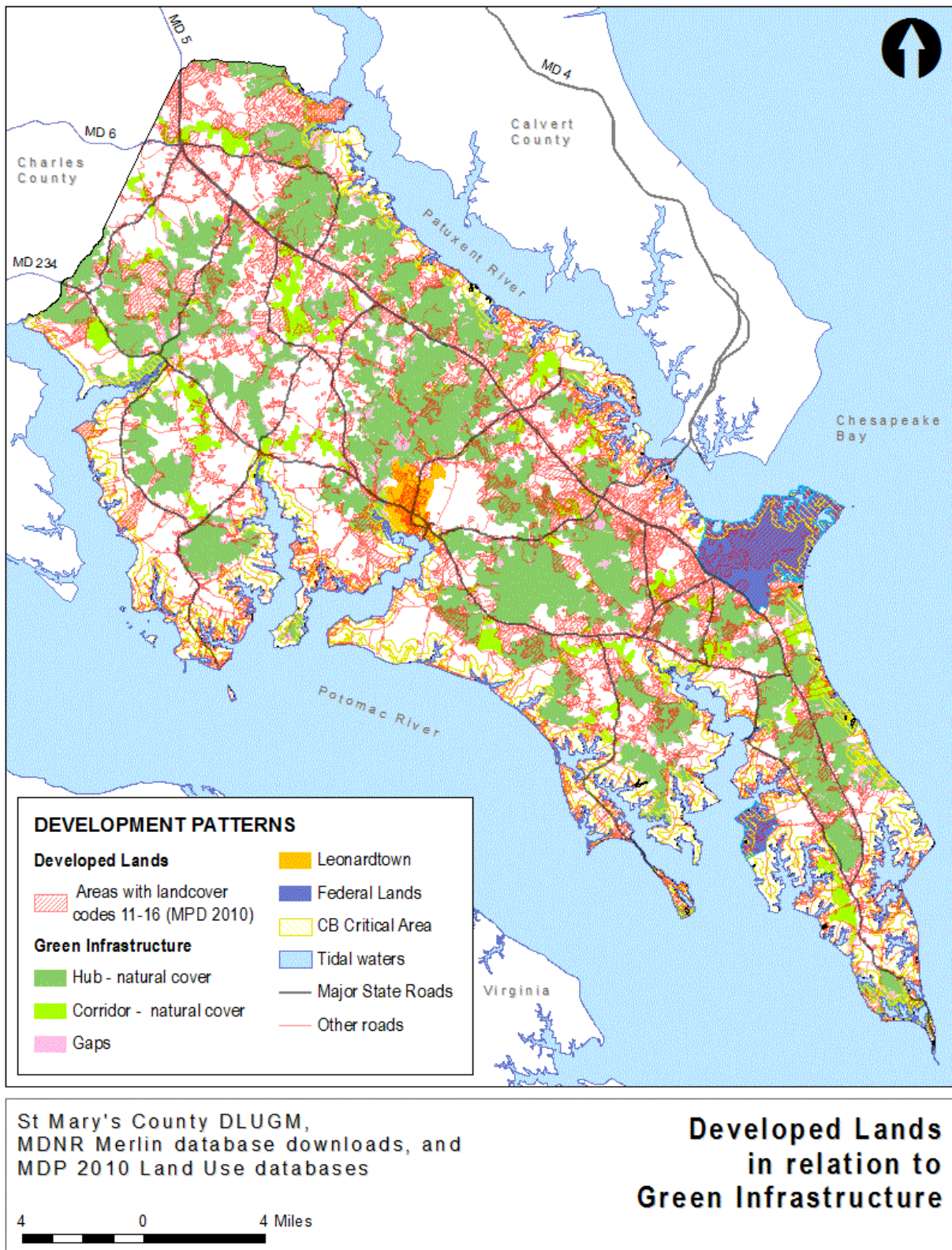
In addition to preserving natural landscapes within these areas, the County works to promote sustainable agricultural land practices and conservation techniques with the local farming communities.

Map 12: Planned Growth Areas and Conservation Areas



Map 12 shows the relationship of the areas planned for development, and areas of focus for natural resource land conservation, including the St. Mary's River State Park and Wildland, the 8,950-acre Huntersville Rural Legacy Area, the 13,703-acre Mattapany Rural Legacy Area, other parklands, conservation easements, and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (CBCA). Such areas contain significant natural, cultural, and historic resource areas that could be subject to loss or harm resulting from significant development, alteration, or inadequate protection from off-site development impacts. These are also sending areas for TDRs.

Map 13: Development Lands and Green Infrastructure



Map 13 illustrates green infrastructure in relation to both developed lands and the County's designated conservation areas. Since the green infrastructure mapping was completed, several areas have either been developed or are approved for future development, thereby compromising some of the connectivity that is so important to retaining the value of green infrastructure.

Maryland's Department of Natural Resources green infrastructure assessment shows the largest green infrastructure hubs in St. Mary's County include:

- St. Mary's River Wildland and State Park
- Lands adjacent to the Three Notch Road in the 1st Election District
- Areas west and south of MD Route 6 near Huntersville
- Huntersville Rural Legacy Area
- McIntosh Run watershed northwest of the Town of Leonardtown

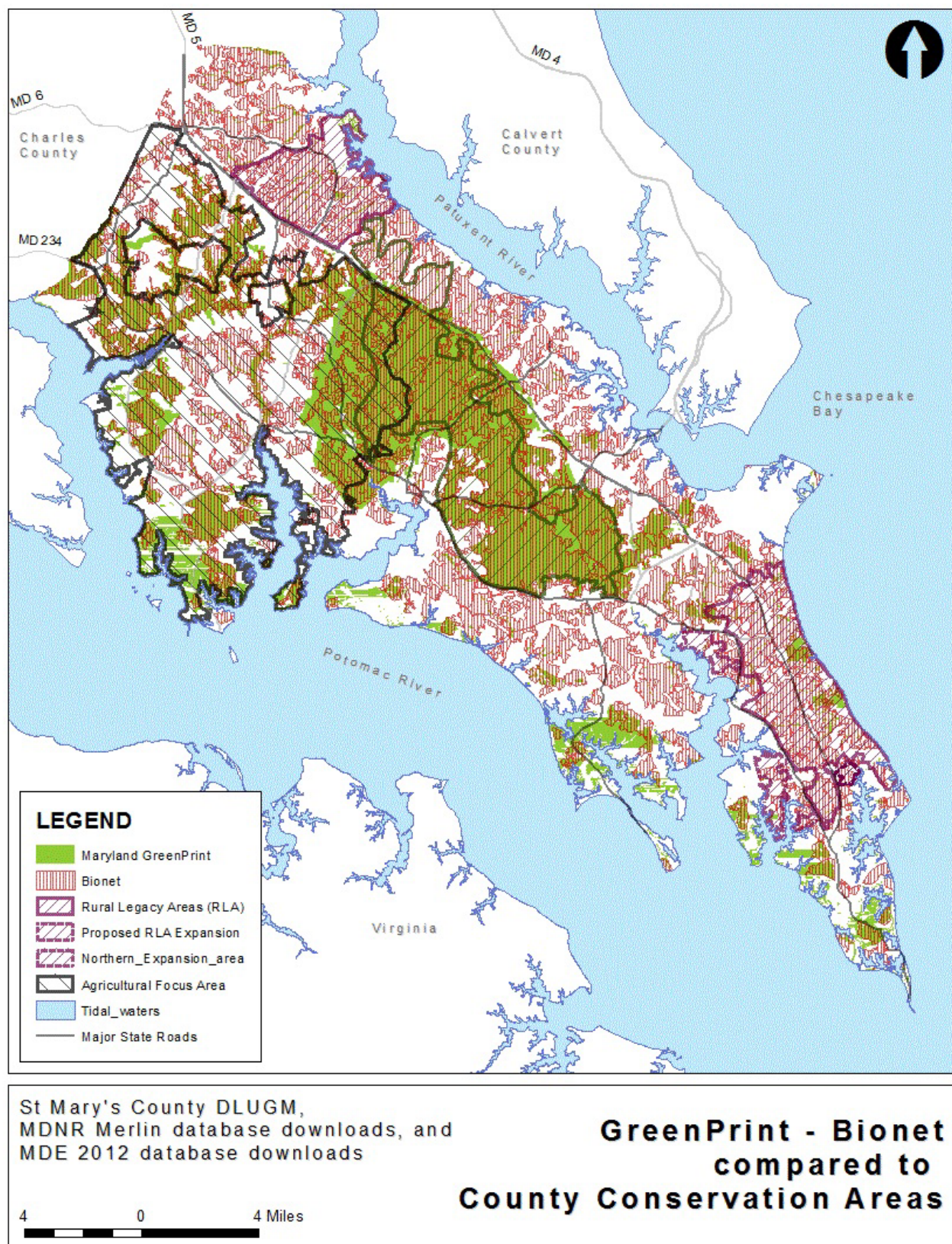
Use of Resource Data and Inventories

County planners and development reviewers use available State and County data inventories of land cover, natural resource lands, conservation areas, protected lands, and other environmental features for plan and project analysis. The County also maintains a comprehensive GIS-based inventory of areas, and information relevant to lands of natural resource significance, land use, and environmental planning. The County makes use of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' GreenPrint, which includes Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs), lands, and watersheds of high ecological value identified as conservation priorities by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. GreenPrint also displays information about Maryland's four most active State operated land conservation programs: Program Open Space (POS) – Stateside, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), and the Rural Legacy Program.

The green infrastructure assessment is cited in the Zoning Ordinance (*Article 7, Section 71.8 4.d [8]*) in reference to preserving forest interior dwelling species (FIDS) habitat, and at Section 71.8.7.a.(3) which requires minimized disturbance in forested areas by clustering development and maintaining corridors of existing forest or woodland to provide connections between wildlife habitat areas. GreenPrint information must be consulted and used to identify areas, at a minimum, where these natural resource corridors should be maintained.

The Biodiversity Conservation Network (or BioNet) of Maryland systematically identifies and prioritizes ecologically important lands to conserve Maryland's biodiversity (i.e., plants, animals, habitats, and landscapes). This dataset aggregates numerous separate data layers hierarchically according to the BioNet Criteria Matrix. The Biodiversity Conservation Network assessment was developed to provide decision support for Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' species and land conservation programs. These data provide the State and conservation partners with critical information to efficiently identify key lands for potential protection, and to improve land planning efforts. The BioNet data allows agencies to maximize the influence and effectiveness of public and private conservation investments, promote shared responsibilities for land conservation between public and private sectors, and guide and encourage compatible land uses and land management practices.

Map 14: County-Designated Conservation Areas



Designated Conservation and Other Natural Resource Areas

The areas defined by St. Mary's County for natural resource preservation encompass a significantly larger area than is defined in GreenPrint mapping. This larger defined area is supported by County goals, policies, and programs, and by Maryland planning requirements.

The County has established a goal to retain St. Mary's County's rural character and economy through preserving 80% of the County's land area in its current rural state, and focusing development in specified districts that total the remaining 20% of the land area in the County. Growth areas intended to enhance the quality of life, and offer a small town or urban character as appropriate for our "high-tech" economy. The County utilizes regulations to concentrate development in suitable areas planned for growth, and also to achieve protection of important rural resource lands through requirements for sensitive areas conservation, mandatory open space and clustering provisions, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program, and use of TDRs to permanently set aside large blocks of resource lands. County programs to protect resource lands are intended to achieve wide-scale rural land conservation with minimal demand for local, state, or federal funding. In order to make best use of available funding, County designated conservation areas have been adopted to target funding for specific purposes in specific areas. These areas are shown on **Map 14** and include:

- Huntersville Rural Legacy Area, which protects natural, cultural, and agricultural resources in the north county area.
- Mattapany Rural Legacy Area (under consideration for expansion in 2017) which protects natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and minimizes conflicts with DOD operations in the southern county.
- Agricultural Focus Area which protects the county's highest concentrations of actively-farmed parcels including those in Amish and Mennonite communities.
- Natural Resource Focus Area (described in greater detail below).

The Natural Resources Focus Area links the St. Mary's River Wildland and State Park to the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area, and encompasses large portions of the McIntosh Run sub-watershed. This area includes one of the most heavily forested watersheds in Southern Maryland, and includes habitat for a number of rare, threatened, and endangered species. The Natural Resources Focus Area includes important hubs mapped by GreenPrint, and areas that are priorities for preservation by federal agencies and conservation organizations. The Focus Area offers an opportunity to maintain forest and riparian habitats connecting the Potomac and Patuxent watersheds, and provides a defined greenspace between the County's two development districts in Leonardtown and Lexington Park. The Focus Area also contains key landscapes identified by the USFW's, "*Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) for a Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area.*"

The County's designated conservation areas are generally consistent with the State's GreenPrint conservation priorities (**Map 14**). The most noticeable differences between County and State identified natural resource land conservation priority areas are:

- i) Where the large central Targeted Ecological Area extends east of Loveville Road/Point Lookout Road and the County's Natural Resources Focus Area which starts east of the roads but also extends north of Three Notch Road.
- ii) Along the St. Mary's/Charles County border where GreenPrint has a Targeted Ecological Area, that is not a County-designated area.

The County has not completed an independent inventory assessment of its green infrastructure. However, a considerable amount of natural resource and watershed inventory and assessment work has been completed. That work in combination with the State’s GreenPrint mapping provides a solid basis for implementing the County’s natural resource protection goals. **Table 6** summarizes this work.

Table 6: Watershed and Related Natural Resources Studies

Watershed	Report/date/author	Description, Findings and Recommendations
Sensitive Lands (RTES) – Countywide	Natural Resource Conservation Summary for St. Mary’s County, Maryland – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, January 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document inventories potential conservation resources and is part of a series of investigations focused on watershed management and restoration in the County, as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Mary’s River Feasibility Study. Three types of conservation resources are investigated – rare, threatened, and endangered species; wetlands that are located beyond the limits of regulatory controls within the Lexington Park and Leonardtown Development Districts; and contiguous forest areas within the County. • Inventory of potential conservation resources as part of the Corps of Engineers St. Mary’s River Feasibility Study (25 sites of rare, threatened, and/or endangered species and their habitats; wetlands in the Lexington Park and Leonardtown development districts; and contiguous forest using 1995 DNR forest inventory map), including the St. Mary’s River Watershed and McIntosh Run Protection Area. • Identifies Countywide green infrastructure areas (hubs, corridors) and major forest blocks in the St. Mary’s River Watershed and McIntosh Run Protection Area. • Findings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McIntosh Run warrants highest level of protection from land use impacts. 2. St. Mary’s River Bottomland needs its 5,000 acres of forest, open land, and aquatic habitat protected. 3. Use contiguous forest mapping inventory during development review to maintain connections between hubs and corridors.
Countywide	Maryland’s Clean Water Action Plan (1998) – Clean Water Action Plan Technical Workgroup, December 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean water action plans are required by the Federal government to identify watersheds not meeting clean water and other natural resource goals for purposes of developing restoration strategies. All of Maryland’s watersheds were examined using a standard classification system to evaluate conditions and develop watershed restoration, protection, and preservation priorities. The three categories are: 1) watersheds not meeting clean water and natural resource goals; 2) watersheds meeting goals but needing preventive actions to sustain quality; and 3) pristine or sensitive watersheds meeting goals but needing extra levels of protection. • All seven watersheds in the County fail one or more clean water/natural resource goals. The St. Clement’s, Wicomico and Lower Potomac Rivers watersheds meet two or more indicators of high quality and are classified as Category 3 watersheds, meaning an extra level of protection is needed to enhance positive indicators; St. Mary’s River, Gilbert Swamp, and Lower Patuxent watersheds meet four or more indicators of high quality and are classified as Selected Category 3 watersheds, again needing protection to enhance positive indicators. Breton Bay was added as a Selected Category 3 watershed after the action plan was released, because it was found to be both a Category 1 Priority (Restoration) watershed and a Selected Category 3 watershed – one of only 18 such watersheds in the State.

Watershed	Report/date/author	Description, Findings and Recommendations
St. Mary's River	Watershed Evaluation for St. Mary's River and McIntosh Run Watersheds- Watershed Assessment Plan –KCI Technologies, April 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines six sub-watersheds of the St. Mary's River watershed and five sub-watersheds of McIntosh Run (see Breton Bay Watershed below). Identifies percent of watersheds unsuitable for development, areas with development constraints, and areas for wetland and forest mitigation; calculated watershed/land use carrying capacity (amount of acceptable impervious surface without effects on water quality). Based on zoning and the amount of unsuitable lands (bad soils, slopes, etc.) conservation recommendations are made to reduce impacts and zoning/land use changes are suggested where necessary.
Lower Potomac River	Tributary Strategies for the Lower Potomac Watershed Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, the portion of this watershed in St. Mary's County has been addressed only by Klein (1994) – see above in this table, and through the Tributary Strategies.
Wicomico River	Wicomico Scenic River Study and Management Plan – MD DNR and Wicomico Scenic River Local Advisory Board, 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This watershed is a designated Maryland Scenic and Wild River. Extensive inventory of natural, historic, and cultural resources. Numerous recommendations for compatible land use, agricultural, and conservation practices to enhance water quality; conserve soil resources; control source sewerage discharge; urban nonpoint pollution, storm water, and sediment loads; facilitate compatible forestry operations and maintain/restore riparian forest buffers; and conduct a full environmental impact study for restoring nine miles of channelized Gilbert Run.
Gilbert Swamp		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This watershed a sub watershed of the Wicomico River is mostly in Charles County where it has been studied intensely along with the Zekiah Swamp Run.
St. Clements Bay	No watershed studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Soil Conservation Service has been very active in achieving soil conservation and water quality plan goals in the County's largest agricultural watershed. Plans have been approved on 15,187 acres out of a proposed 21,154 acres.

Watershed	Report/date/author	Description, Findings and Recommendations
Breton Bay	Breton Bay Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)– The Center for Watershed Protection in cooperation with the MD DNR, July 2003; follow-up to the Breton Bay Stream Corridor Assessment Survey by MD DNR, January 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 square mile watershed that includes the 22,000-acre McIntosh Run watershed, its largest tributary, and a Natural Heritage Area with 80 percent forest cover (10,480 acres) and several RTES (plants and dwarf mussels). • The WRAS presents ways to reduce nonpoint source pollution and other impairments while conserving this unique, high quality natural resource. • Severe channel, stream bank, and sites with inadequate buffers are identified for restorative action. • Findings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce sediment/nutrient inputs via infrastructure upgrades; riparian buffer; and stream enhancements, storm water retrofits, and sewerage plant upgrades. 2. Use best agricultural and forestry practices via conservation, protection, and stewardship (promote the McIntosh Run Land Conservation Partnership and Patuxent Tidewater Trust). 3. Promote stewardship awareness (education/outreach, pollution prevention programs). 4. Train development review staff and local development community and promote best practices in development. 5. Enhance aesthetic and recreational interactions (integrate town, county, civic, and homeowner association projects and promote water-oriented recreation).
McIntosh Run Tributary	Watershed Evaluation for St. Mary's River and <u>McIntosh Run Watersheds</u> -Watershed Assessment Plan –KCI Technologies, April 1998 (developed as part of the St. Mary's River Watershed Study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines five sub-watersheds of McIntosh Run regarding percent of the watershed and tributaries unsuitable for development, areas with development constraints, and areas for wetland and forest mitigation; produced watershed maps; and calculated watershed/land use carrying capacity (amount of acceptable impervious surface without effects on water quality). • Based on zoning and the amount of unsuitable lands (bad soils, slopes, etc.), conservation recommendations are made to reduce impacts and zoning/land use changes are suggested where necessary.
St. Mary's River – Hilton Run Tributary	Management Plan for Hilton Run – Citizens of St. Mary's County and the Hilton Run, Team, October 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines water quality degradation of this 2,230 – acre sub-watershed to St. Mary's River. • Recommendations encourage stewardship and best management practices by homeowners, neighborhoods, farm management, solid waste, and air quality. • Recommendations encourage policy changes regarding storm water management, site design, building codes, promotion of mixed-use development to combat sprawl, creation of incentives for green design, enforcement of regulations, and for activating the St. Mary's River Watershed Commission.

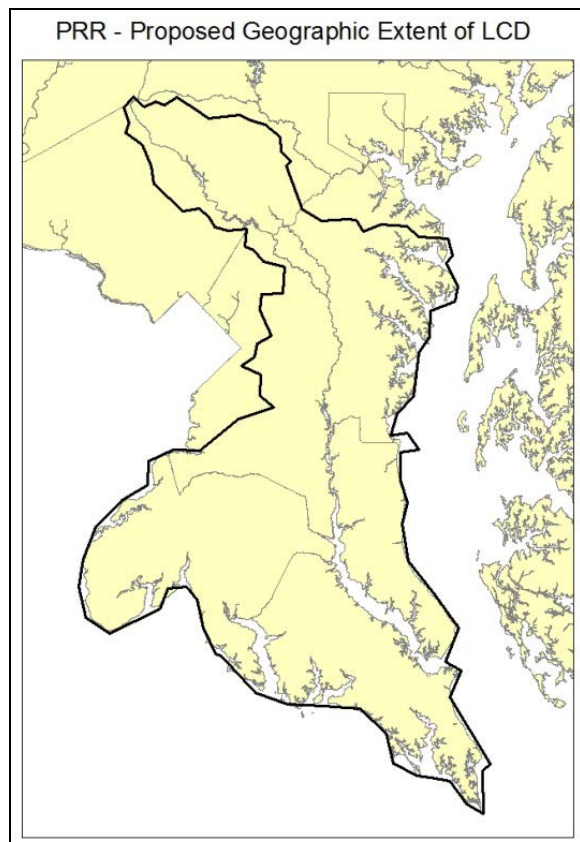
Watershed	Report/date/author	Description, Findings and Recommendations
St. Mary's River and Tidal Creeks	<p>Opportunities to Preserve and Enhance the Quality of the St. Mary's River and the County's Tidal Creeks – Richard D. Klein, Community and Environmental Defense Services, October 1994</p> <p>St. Mary's River Watershed restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines land use and resulting water quality impacts on 56 tidal creeks with emphasis on the St. Mary's River, Blake Creek, Cuckold Creek, Hickory Landing Creek, and Saint Jerome's Creek. Findings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Most tidal creeks have characteristics that inhibit tidal flushing. Storm water regulations need improvement to control runoff pollution and maintain groundwater discharge. Cluster development is encouraged in tidal creeks that do not flush well. Allow TDRs from cropland located on highly erodible soils and from crops/forest in creek watersheds that flush poorly. Status: The WRAS is scheduled for completion in 2011. Projects identified will be incorporated into County programs via capital projects, grant funded implementation projects and will be include in the Watershed Implementation Plan Phase II in development for approval by EPA and MDE.
Lower Patuxent River	Patuxent River Feasibility Study – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential problems, needs, and opportunities for restoration identified. No projects in St. Mary's County pursued to date although many issues have been addressed through Soil Conservation District projects or through individual permits as development has proceeded. Recommendations for better management of highly erodible soils implemented through amendments to the zoning ordinance.
Patuxent Waters Conservation Area	USFWS and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of reference species in 2016 and boundaries necessary for habitat protection to be recommended for approval in 2017. Through conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships within the recommended boundary, federal agencies will work with conservation partners and local communities to identify and protect the most ecologically significant, resilient, and water quality enhancing natural areas remaining in the landscape. Funding for some federal acquisition of land and easements from willing sellers is proposed, but the bulk of additional protection is planned to come through creative partnerships with private and public landowners.

Planning, Land Use Management Authority, Easements, and Funding

The key components of the County's planning strategy to implement natural resource goals is its land use management, zoning, and subdivision authorities. Fundamental regulations are summarized in **Table 7**. As development occurs, these regulations help protect sensitive resource lands, and provide an opportunity to fill gaps green infrastructure. To date, the County's easement acquisition efforts have focused on agricultural land preservation. The Rural Legacy Program and other easement programs discussed in the agricultural land preservation chapter of this Plan are valuable in that they have enabled the conservation of both farmland and natural resource land. Agricultural land preservation also serves to protect natural resources from development. However, funding specifically for natural resource land conservation is generally limited. Program Open Space is generally used for parks and recreation land acquisition and development projects, some of which conserve natural resource lands and make outdoor recreation opportunities available to the public.

The new USFW initiative, "Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) for a Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area," is in process and is anticipated to make significant new funds available for land conservation in Southern Maryland and in St. Mary's County. In 2011, the Director of USFW approved a preliminary proposal to expand the acquisition boundary for the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland. The proposed expanded boundary (area within the heavy outline shown in **Figure 8**) includes the Patuxent River watershed and other ecologically and economically important watersheds in central and southern Maryland, including Mattawoman Creek, Nanjemoy Creek, Zekiah Swamp, McIntosh Run, and the headwaters of the South and Severn Rivers. This was the first step in a three-step process that, if approved, will create a landscape-scale refuge on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Through conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships within the proposed boundary, the Refuge will work with conservation partners and local communities to identify and protect the most ecologically significant, resilient, and water quality enhancing natural areas remaining in the landscape. While this may include federal acquisition of land and easements from willing sellers, the bulk of the additional protection is anticipated to come through creative partnerships with private and public landowners.

Figure 8: Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area



The final Patuxent Waters Conservation Area Plan is expected to be completed by USFW by January 2017. Once the LCD is completed and approved, it is anticipated that new federal funding will be made available to support land conservation goals totaling 280,000 acres in the defined areas. Protection efforts would seek 15,000 acres fee simple acquisition and 25,000 acres of easements per year in the five Southern Maryland counties using partner funds, donated easements, fee simple purchase from willing landowners, and local zoning protection--floodplains sensitive areas etc. The Conservation Landscape funds can be used as a match for many funding sources (including state, local, private, and other federal sources) to preserve land.

Table 7: St. Mary's County Natural Resources Protection Requirements Summary

(NOTE: Planned Ordinance updates to implement the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Lexington Park Development District Master Plan may modify the regulation or the referenced Zoning Ordinance citation.)

Subject	Zoning Ordinance	Criteria
For actual requirements, see St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance		
Natural Resources Conservation (streams, wetlands, hydric soils, floodplain, steep slopes, erodible soils, habitat protection, shoreline resources)	Chapter 71 Sections 1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streams – maintain natural stream buffers (replant if needed) of 100' width from edge of bank for perennial streams and intermittent streams within the Critical Area (CBCA), 50' width from edge of bank outside of Critical Area for intermittent streams; maintain fish movement; and prohibit disrupting stream flow with rip-rap or other artificial means. Wetlands and hydric soils – 100' buffer for tidal wetlands with expansion for steep slopes, highly erodible soils and hydric soils); 25' buffer for non-tidal wetlands (expanded up to 100' for adjoining hydric soils); mitigation required for any disturbance. 100-year Floodplain Protections – establishes environmental review procedures and minimum floodplain protection standards such as prohibiting any new development within floodplains; requiring permits for any work within floodplains; requiring easements for all floodplain areas; and requiring 50' buffers around edges, reduced to 25' with approved water quality plan. Steep Slopes/Erodible Soils – no disturbance on slopes over 25 percent; on highly erodible soils with greater than 15 percent slope; no grading on steep slopes within 50' of streams in CBCA and stream buffers (many detailed requirements for each). Highly Erodible Soils – Soil Conservation Service review required for disturbed soils and wetlands; Critical Area Buffer, stream buffers, and wetland buffers expand to extent of steep erodible soils or 300 feet (whichever is greater) include these soil types; requires use of infiltration, flow attenuation, storm water retention, or detention. Habitat Protection – required for expanded CBCA buffer, forest interior dwelling species (FIDS) habitat for contiguous forests generally 50 acres or more and adjacent to MD DNR's green infrastructure network, habitats for rare, threatened, endangered species (RTES), colonial water bird nesting areas, historic waterfowl concentration areas, Natural Heritage Areas, anadromous fish propagation waters; (many detailed requirements for each).
Forest Conservation (timber, forest, and woodlands)	Chapter 72 Sections 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber Harvests – forest management plans required for over one acre in CBCA, plus sediment control plan; all harvesting subject to review; no cutting in buffer; harvested lands must remain in forest reuse, with regeneration, for minimum of five years. Forest/Woodland Protection CBCA mitigation required to offset clearing/cutting impacts; (many other requirements); Mitigation-banking allowed with approved plans for native species reforestation or afforestation.
Forest Conservation	Chapter 75 Sections 1-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations for cutting and clearing certain forests and to require forest stand delineations and conservation plans for sites greater than 20,000 square feet for many development activities.
Floodplain Regulations	Chapter 76 Sections 1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes standards and regulations related to development within floodplains; requires site plans and permits for any disturbance; flood elevation and location standards for structures are established; numerous other County, State and Federal permits and procedures required.
Chesapeake Bay Critical Area	Sections 22.5 and 24.4, Chapters 41, 72, 73 and 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies to all land and water within 1,000 feet beyond heads of tide boundaries and private tidal wetlands (many more requirements for Intensely Developed Areas, Limited Development Areas and Resource Conservation Areas).

Other Regulatory or Management Programs

The County's transfer of development rights (TDR) program contributes to the County's natural resource land conservation strategy. As of 2010, the TDR program permanently protected 2,846 acres, retiring 1,107 development rights on 134 tracts (may include multiple lots in common ownership). Provisions in the subdivision ordinance provide for protection of natural features in the RPD by requiring major subdivisions to cluster development. In subdivisions, which create more than five lots, at least 50% of the tract must be preserved in open space. The subdivision regulations also allow for the provision of greenways where they preserve or establish sections of designated green infrastructure corridors or routes listed in the Maryland Greenways Atlas.

The County's recreation and parks land acquisition program is another means of conserving lands with high natural resource values, and making them accessible for appropriate public use and interaction with nature. For example, the County's Myrtle Point Park is evolving into a center for resource-based recreation including environmental education, supplementing the excellent program at the St. Mary's Public Schools Environmental Education Center at the Elms.

Eco-tourism and Resource-Based Recreation

The County Comprehensive Plan encourages both heritage tourism and resource-based recreation. Both activities are complementary components to the County's natural resource conservation program. In 2003, St. Mary's County adopted a regional Heritage Tourism Management Plan designed to increase and enhance visitation in Southern Maryland. In 2016, the County was in the process of preparing a new tourism master plan. Preliminary findings and vision for that plan identify multiple assets and opportunities for enhancing County-managed parks, recreation, and cultural resources as attractions for potential visitors to the County. St. Mary's County also manages an active historic preservation program, with an inventory of 700 historic sites and structures, including 30 sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

D. Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program

This section presents County staff evaluation of the ability of St. Mary's County to achieve natural resource goals through an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the State's and County's natural resource land conservation implementation strategies, programs, and processes currently utilized in the County.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Natural Resources Implementation Program

Comprehensive Planning Process

Strengths

- Natural resource conservation goals, objectives, and policies are well integrated in the comprehensive planning process. They provide a framework to implement relevant planning strategies, programs, regulations, and decision-making. The goals are grounded in the Comprehensive Plan's vision statement and are compatible with the State's goals for natural resource land conservation.
- The 2010 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance incorporates many of the Comprehensive Plan's natural resource conservation and protection recommendations. While some of the regulations go beyond minimum State or Federal requirements, the increased standards will be necessary for the County to meet water quality improvement goals, to assist in hazard mitigation planning, to protect life and property, and to make the County eligible for participation in programs such as the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, which has the potential to reduce flood insurance costs for citizens.

Weaknesses

- The County has not established measurable objectives to evaluate growth and development impacts, other than the regulatory criteria contained in the Zoning Ordinance and subdivision regulations. Such regulations and criteria only apply to individual developmental submittals and do not facilitate comprehensive reviews based on area-wide objectives. Development of measures to evaluate impacts at a watershed level will be needed for implementation of the Phase II & III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) and any future "Accounting for Growth" actions in the County.
- The State can assist with development of measurable objectives by working with the County to create measurable natural resource planning objectives relating to Chesapeake Bay TMDLs, NPDES permitting, and State planning objectives and Smart Growth goals. General objectives, incorporated into the 2010 Comprehensive Plan update, facilitate coordinated efforts to restore the Bay and to follow through on the WIP and for the two-year implementation milestones necessary to remove the Bay and tributaries from the impaired waters list by 2025. It will be necessary to incorporate those detailed objectives and milestones in future updates of the Capital Improvements Program; the Comprehensive Plan; and functional plans such as this Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.
- Watershed strategies and related studies are not fully integrated into the comprehensive planning process. Plans such as the Breton Bay Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, a St. Mary's River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy prepared by County residents, and the Management Plan for Hilton Run recommend changes in land use and development practices that should be considered in County comprehensive and functional plans.

Use of Resource Data and Inventories

Strengths

- The County has developed a comprehensive GIS-based system that includes natural resources data, which the County utilizes in small area planning and in day-to-day subdivision and site plan review. Extensive analysis of this data was used to update the Natural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Weaknesses

- The current County soil survey from 1978 was focused on the agricultural and forest capability and less on the development aspects of soils in the County and is therefore not as accurate as may be needed for development review purposes. The County and State have shifted to the digital soil survey, which simplified obtaining relevant data. Aspects of the survey still need to be updated to facilitate regulation of erodible soil protection requirements, especially as they pertain to steep slope protection.
- The County has been working with the State to more easily access the State's secured inventory of sites with RTES areas. However, timeliness of reviews remains an issue for addressing RTES issues in land development applications as they go through County development review and permit processes. Early identification is essential to provide adequate protection to sensitive habitats and minimize impacts to RTES while also continuing to protect data to minimize habitat resource destruction before development applications are submitted for approval.

Designated Conservation and Other Natural Resource Areas

Strengths

- The Huntersville Rural Legacy Area (RLA), established in 1998, and the Mattapany RLA, established in 2004, have been successful in concentrating easement purchases and protecting large contiguous natural resource land areas. The County expanded the Huntersville RLA in 2004 and intends to expand it again to include lands removed from the Mechanicsville town center development envelope. The Mattapany RLA was expanded in 2009 to facilitate added land protection efforts near Naval Air Station Patuxent River.
- The St. Mary's River Wildland is an important designated protection area in the central part of the County and serves as the anchor for conservation efforts in the St. Mary's River Watershed. The County has identified an extensive sensitive area network centered on streams, floodplains and wetlands, the surrounding steep slopes, and sensitive soils, and has established regulations to protect and enhance these resources.

Weaknesses

- The County's designated conservation areas (CBCA, Huntersville RLA, Mattapany RLA, and St. Mary's River Wildland) have been criticized as being too small in overall area to effectively meet State goals to create a network of contiguous green infrastructure and focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas. The Resource Focus area was identified in part to address this concern, but it lacks any formal implementation mechanism for resource conservation.
- Feedback mechanisms in the RLA review process need improvement so local applicants (land trusts and the County) have direction regarding the status of applications. Prompt feedback is important so the local community can use its resources to respond to evolving opportunities.
- The sensitive areas protected by regulations are inadequately monitored at times to ensure that lands that are protected remain as such. While lands protected by regulation accomplish many resource, habitat, and services goals, the regulations can be changed to weaken protection, and privately protected land is not available to create a coordinated network accessible to the public for recreation or tourism purposes.

Planning and Land Use Management Authority, Easements, and Funding

Strengths

- The County's zoning and subdivision ordinance's natural resource protection requirements are generally effective in addressing impacts related to specific development projects. The regulations address all sensitive resources.
- Environmental planners and review staff are plugged in procedurally to the development review process facilitating their input into subdivision and site plan review.
- Local funds for land preservation increased in 1999, and more dramatically in 2001, when the County dedicated a portion of its increased recordation tax to conserve rural lands.

Weaknesses

- Staff resources are limited, and additional staff with the specialized training required to cover the diverse range of necessary environmental planning and review functions are needed. Presently, the County only has two environmental planners performing site plan and subdivision review, with a third environmental planner in the Comprehensive division. These planners perform a wide variety of duties that include maintaining environmental inventories, planning and research, CBCA program implementation, grant writing, project implementation, training, and coordinating WIP implementation. The result is that environmental review is often not conducted in sufficient detail, items fall through cracks, and opportunities to make connections and close feedback loops are lost.
- There are also weaknesses in the County's ability to protect portions of green infrastructure using its planning authority. In the zoning and subdivision regulations, the County has linked protection of sensitive habitats, such as forest interior dwelling species (FIDS) habitat, to green infrastructure. However, the requirements are only one of several ways in which an applicant may meet the plan approval requirements. Green infrastructure, policies for watersheds, and habitat identification and protection, need to be better integrated with local and state regulations. Better integration would allow County staff to work more directly with land developers to ensure that adequate protections are incorporated into their development plans.
- Continued efforts to fund natural resource conservation, especially for fee simple and easement acquisitions, are needed.
- Implementation of HB 462 to restore and protect state funding to transfer tax-funded land conservation, preservation, and recreation programs by providing \$60 million in new funding (\$20 million in 2017 and \$40 million in 2018) for programs (MALPF, Rural Legacy, and Program Open Space); allocating funds for state land and park development, maintenance, and recreation; repaying \$90 million in past transfers from General Funds starting in 2018; and appropriating additional repayments starting in 2021 totaling \$152 million.
- The County's Agricultural and Land Preservation Program has been primarily used to match State funds to preserve agricultural lands. While this has also helped natural resource conservation, such as in the Huntersville RLA, few resources are dedicated primarily for natural resource land conservation.
- Adding other programs working to preserve land as partners to the REPI agreement for Southern Maryland to allow additional funding sources to be matched with REPI funds.

Other Regulatory or Management Programs

Strengths

- The County's suite of programs for natural resource protection is comprehensive and includes sensitive area protection regulations, a TDR program, and cluster development requirements. A special strength is the 50% minimum required open space provision for major subdivisions in the RPD and residential zones in growth areas through which natural resource land and farm land is protected as part of a development project.
- The County has established development application and review procedures to incorporate more detailed environmental comments earlier in the plan design and review process.

Weaknesses

- St. Mary's County is a non-delegated County for sediment and erosion control. The County has relied on the Soil Conservation Service to review sediment and erosion plans, and on the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to inspect sites for compliance. There are insufficient MDE staff to adequately oversee all development activity in the County, which reduces regulatory effectiveness, and has meant that only major projects and "complaints" are adequately addressed. Since 2012, the County has hired staff and consultants to perform reviews, erosion control inspections, and for storm water management construction and maintenance inspections of smaller projects.

Eco-tourism and Resource-based Recreation

Strengths

- St. Mary's County actively promotes its rural character and cultural heritage as a participant in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area program. Both the County and State have done a good job documenting and promoting the area's rich natural and historic resources.
- In 2009, Maryland purchased two large tracts, Kits Point (St. Inigoes State Forest) and Newtowne Neck, and in 2015, several parcels known as the Walton Lumber tract were added to the Salem State Forest adjacent to St Mary's Lake —these lands provide significant cultural and natural resource assets in the County. Current efforts are underway to promote new eco-tourism and resource-based recreation opportunities in the County.
- Development of a South County tourism plan focused on culture and water-based activities.
- A Patuxent River Commission sponsored workgroup effort to promote and expand water-focused ecotourism in the Patuxent River watershed.
- Promotion and expansion of agritourism and of equine operation.
- Federal, state, and local agency efforts to develop resources for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

Weaknesses

- A significant weakness is the sluggishness in implementing the capital projects and program development activities set forth in the Heritage Tourism Management Plan.

Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program

Resource protection is a key component of the County Comprehensive Plan's vision statement that establishes a strong policy foundation for implementation strategies. Overall, the County has made good progress in inventorying, mapping, and understanding its natural resources. Substantial progress has been made by the County, citizens, and others in analyzing resources and the impacts of development in most of the County's watersheds. The Zoning Ordinance has been updated to incorporate environmental and conservation criteria. Easement programs have permanently preserved over 18,478 acres of agricultural and natural resource lands.

The County's suite of programs for natural resource protection is comprehensive, but some areas for improvement in processes appear to exist. Based on County staff's analysis of natural resource land conservation programs, the key areas for improvement were identified:

- Objective criteria and development review requirements should be established to consider the overall impact of developments on County natural resource areas. Current tools and criteria do not allow for the evaluation of the cumulative impacts of multiple projects on a resource, or weighting of such impacts on the health and function of the natural resource area. Past plans have cited the need to account for the cumulative impact of multiple projects on the health and function of County natural resource areas. Improved assessment and tracking of development impacts on natural resources, ideally on a sub-watershed level, will allow the County to better target preservation efforts, and to evaluate the cost and benefit of decisions made at the local level. Over the past 5 years, largely in response to the Bay TMDL and other Clean Water Act mandates, many new tools and criteria have been developed at federal, state, and regional levels that the County can use to create objective and better-integrated project review criteria to meet this need.
- No group or entity has yet demonstrated the range of capabilities necessary to move natural resource conservation efforts forward – to market conservation programs, identify or generate funds for land acquisition and protection, or to initiate fee simple and easement acquisitions. As a result, resource protection is only provided to the minimum extent required by local ordinance.
- Inadequate resources (staff and funding) are viewed to inhibit strategic targeting and acquisition of easements or fee simple land to conserve. The County primarily responds to offers brought to it by willing landowners.
- Inconsistent capacity to oversee easements and manage lands and facilities once acquired is an ongoing issue.

Some improvements have been made to address the weaknesses by adding the Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. as a member of the partnership of agencies working on conservation projects but dedicated funding to pay for services remains an issue for projects initiated and funded outside of the Rural Legacy Program.

E. Program Development Strategy for Natural Resource Conservation

County Steps

The County has taken a number of steps to overcome weaknesses and achieve State and local goals for natural resource land conservation, including:

1. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan includes a natural resource conservation focus area connecting the St. Mary's River Watershed and Wildlands, through the Breton Bay watershed to the Huntersville RLA. This focus area identifies where public investment could be leveraged for maximum effect and further the State's goal of concentrating conservation and restoration activities in priority areas. Several properties in the focus area have been acquired by the state and managed by the County since 2010.
2. The County expanded the Huntersville RLA in 2012, and a proposal for expansion of the Mattapany RLA is being considered for approval in 2017. New funding sources are helping to continue easement acquisition and fee simple land conservation in the Huntersville and Mattapany RLAs.
3. The Comprehensive Plan maps important habitat and sensitive areas as a land use, and includes a solid accounting of the extent of protected resource lands in St. Mary's County. While County zoning districts do not show these areas, in response to state legislation, the County must conduct environmental reviews of proposed land development projects as part of the detailed review for compliance with Comprehensive Plan criteria. This detailed environmental review of all projects utilizes updated GIS resource data layers, green infrastructure, FIDS habitat and other habitat and water quality data from State agencies, to ensure that plats and site plans accurately show resources, and are prepared in accordance with regulatory requirements.
4. Adoption of specific Rural Subdivision Design guidelines required protection of agricultural lands, as well as natural landscapes and habitats, as components of the overall rural character of the County.
5. The County's TDR program is used successfully to establish permanent easement protection on natural resource lands countywide.
6. The first property protected in the planned McIntosh Run Watershed Conservation Area is managed under an agreement with the State of Maryland. Additional lands in the watershed are identified as important for protection with in the Patuxent LCD.
7. Green infrastructure has been integrated into comprehensive planning and development review processes. The current Comprehensive Plan and the zoning ordinance contain provisions to ensure that green infrastructure corridors are protected, and eventually consolidated, to provide deeded and dedicated greenways in growth areas, and an easement protected network in rural areas.

Additional County and State Actions

This following recommended strategies are intended to improve natural resource land conservation in St. Mary's County:

County

- Continue to update and utilize the Water Resources Element of the Plan and Watershed Implementation Process to better integrate watershed restoration strategies and tracking into the comprehensive planning, development review, and inspection processes.
- Implement the Breton Bay WRAS and the St. Mary's River Watershed WRAS.

- Increase staff and/or fund contract services for environmental planning, development review, and storm water management maintenance and inspections, to ensure responsive and effective implementation of County programs and regulations developed to meet local, state, and federal mandates.

State

- Continue to implement Maryland HB 462 to restore and protect state funding to transfer tax-funded land conservation, preservation, and recreation programs; to provide new funding (\$20 million in 2017 and \$40 million in 2018) for programs (MALPF, Rural Legacy, and Program Open Space); to allocate funds for state land and park development; and for maintenance and recreation. Also use general funds to repay past transfers (totaling \$90 million) in 2018, and appropriate funds for additional repayments (totaling \$152 million) starting in 2021.
- Identify measurable natural resource planning objectives that can be credited in Phase II and III Watershed Implementation Plans.
- Streamline the easement acquisition and Rural Legacy application process to make it more responsive to County and land trust needs.
- Increase access to the state's RTES inventory to flag development sites and improve RTES habitat review.
- Increase the number of MDE inspectors for sediment and erosion control inspections and compliance.

V. Agricultural Land Preservation

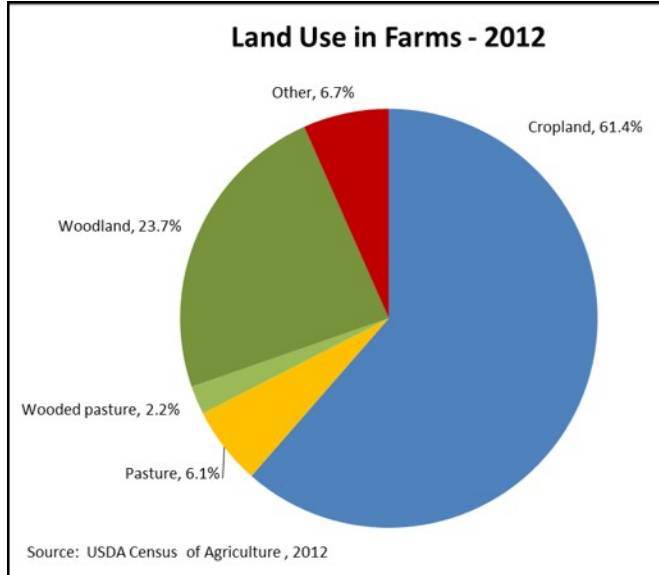
A. Agricultural Industry and Farmland Preservation Overview

Protection of agricultural lands is a key component of the St. Mary's County land conservation strategy. The Agriculture and Seafood Division manages the County's agricultural programs, including land preservation. Deliberately setting aside land for public benefit (for any purpose) has commonalities, and land conservation efforts need to be coordinated. However, agricultural land protection is often far more complex, because it involves leaving land in private hands with participation in programs being voluntary. To achieve its primary purpose (permanent protection of the productive land and its micro-climate resource for food production into the future), skilled farmers and farm families as well as a viable agricultural industry are needed. No other form of land conservation needs to accommodate an economic activity as relatively intense as agriculture.

Agricultural Industry in St. Mary's County

The USDA Census of Agriculture (Census) defines a farm as, "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, in the census year." The Census of Agriculture asks farmers about the amount of land on their farms. The Census consistently reports more land in farms than is reported by the Maryland Department of Planning's (MDP) 2007 Land Use Mapping for agricultural land uses which interprets satellite imagery and does not identify forestland that is on farms.

Figure 9: Land Use on Farms 2012



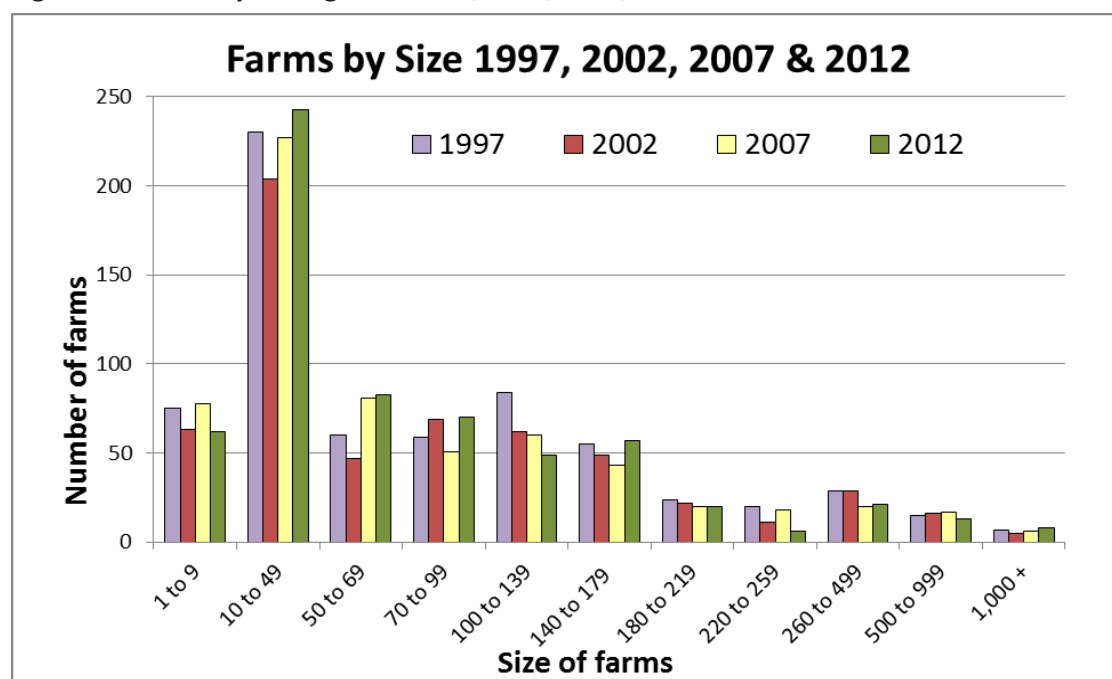
In 2012, the Census counted 67,068 acres of land in farms in St. Mary's County, down from 68,648 acres in 2007. The 2012 Census also showed that, while the average size of farms decreased slightly (from 111 acres in 2007 to 108 acres in 2012), the number of farms in 2012 had increased (up from 621 farms in 2007 to 632 farms in 2012). This continues the trend seen from 2002 to 2007. Land in farms tends to be in a mixture of agricultural uses including cropland, pasture, woodland, and structures. However, cropland is the most dominant use with most St. Mary's County farms growing soybeans, corn, wheat, hay, and barley. Pastureland is primarily used for beef cattle. Nursery greenhouse products is now second to grains in sales value, and tobacco has dropped from second in sales value (after grains/soybeans), to sixth in sales value in the County. Vegetables, cattle for meat, milk, and dairy products now rank 3rd to 5th respectively in value.

In 2012, an average county farm size was 108 acres, down slightly from 111 acres in 2007. Charting the distribution of farms by size shows a preponderance of farms between 10 and 49 acres (**Figure 10**).

In 2012, slightly greater than 72% of all farms were less than 100 acres in size and encompassed just over 25% of the land in farms. Slightly more than 28% of farms were between 100 and more than 1,000 acres and contained nearly 75% of farm land.

The County's history of tobacco cultivation, which can generate a high value product on relatively small acreages, allowed tobacco farms to be subdivided into small-sized, but economically viable operations. However, the percentage of farms producing tobacco has declined primarily due to Maryland's Tobacco Buyout Program, which paid farmers to cease growing tobacco in perpetuity. Of the eight counties in Maryland that had farms producing tobacco in 2012, St. Mary's County ranked first in terms of the value of tobacco production. The County has seen a precipitous drop in the market value of tobacco (from \$14.16 million in 1982 to \$0.906 million in 2007) and the trend for tobacco market value continues despite the Buyout Program ending (\$0.638 million in 2012).

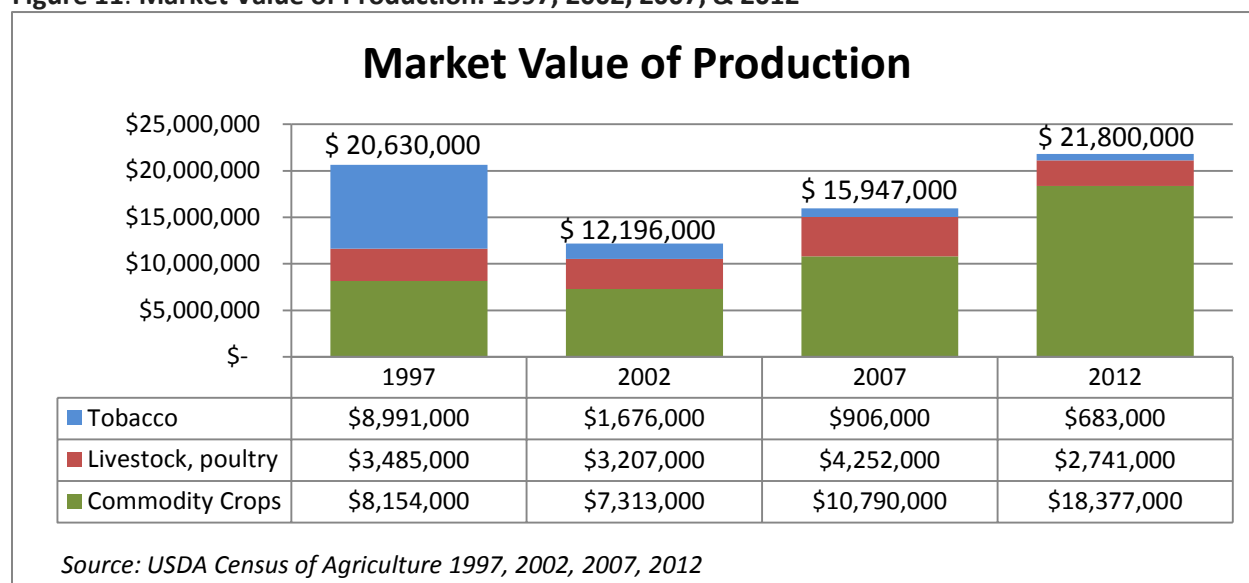
Figure 10: Farms by Acreage Size 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012



Source: St. Mary's County Agriculture and Seafood Division

As shown in **Figure 11**, this downward trend affected the total market value of agricultural production in the County in the mid 2000s, but overall production values rebounded as farmers shifted to producing other crops and products.

Figure 11: Market Value of Production: 1997, 2002, 2007, & 2012



As **Table 8** shows, despite small increase in farmland acreage between 2002 and 2007, St. Mary's County lost a higher percentage of farmland in the ten years between 2002 and 2012 than either the Southern Maryland region or the State of Maryland. In terms of the market value of agricultural products sold, St. Mary's percentage value increased, and while the change was lower than that experienced by the region, it was higher than the state generally. This means that the County and Southern Maryland region experienced a greater increase of agricultural value than the State as a whole. The increase in values over the 10-year period represents a significant industry readjustment, in large part due to strong regional efforts to address changes in the agricultural industry, including help provided to former tobacco farms to shift away from tobacco products to alternative crops, value added products, and farm-to-table direct sales. This greatly enhanced the economic viability of these former tobacco farms.

Table 8: Land in Farms and Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold -2002 to 2012

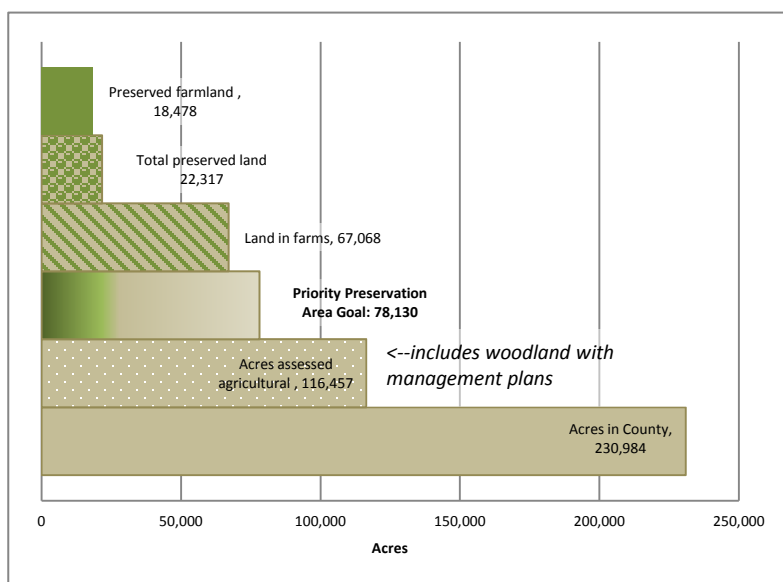
Land in Farms			Market Value of Ag Products Sold		
2002-20012			2007-20012 (1,000 Constant \$)		
	Acres change	% Change		Value change	% Change
Maryland	-21,011	-1.02	Maryland	+\$436,307	+23.78
So. Maryland Region	-169	-0.12	So. Maryland Region	+\$15,990	+55.33
St. Mary's County	-1,139	-1.67	St. Mary's County	+\$5,853	+36.70

B. Farmland Preservation Goals

In 1995, as part of its agricultural land preservation program certification, St. Mary's County set a goal to permanently protect 60,000 acres of farmland. The goal was based on a desire to protect nearly all of the existing productive land base in the County, and was reaffirmed in the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan. No timeframe accompanied this goal, but the creation of a local purchase-of-development rights program was proposed (but has not been funded) to augment participation in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Program. In addition, the County adopted a stronger TDR program in 2007.

The 67,068 acres (29% of the County) identified as land in farms by the 2012 Census is a subset of the 116,457 acres currently assessed as agricultural for tax purposes (2016). Woodlands with forest management plans are eligible for agricultural assessment. Farms in the County often contain a mixture of cropland, pasture, and woodland. Of the 67,068 farm acres in St. Mary's County, the Census identified 46,756 acres (69.7%) as cropland, pasture, or wooded pasture. To date, a total of 22,317.9 acres of farm land have been permanently protected by easements (11,770.5 acres through the MALPF Program, and 4,187.4 acres of farmland through the Rural Legacy program, and 3,110.9 acres through the Maryland Environmental Trust, and the Maryland Historical Trust). An additional 3,249.1 acres have been protected through TDR easements.

Figure 12: Land Preservation Goal



The qualitative goals of the State of Maryland for agricultural land preservation are shared by St. Mary's County. These goals are explicitly stated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, and many of them underpin the programs currently being implemented. For example, the State's goal of protecting high quality productive land in contiguous blocks is reflected in the eligibility requirements for district creation and purchase of development rights programs. It is reinforced in the ranking formula for prioritizing properties sent to the MALPF Program for easement purchase. The goal of protecting natural, forestry, and historic resources, as well as rural character is met by the typical presence of these additional elements on St. Mary's County farms applying for preservation programs.

The purpose of the Rural Preservation Zoning District (RPD), in which most of the farms and preserved lands fall, is "to foster agricultural, forestry, mineral resource extraction, and aquaculture uses, and protect the land base necessary to support these activities." As such, St. Mary's County shares the State's intention to protect its natural resource-based industries. In terms of land management goals, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan adopted a Priority Preservation Area Element, which states the County goals for agricultural resource protection.

C. Current Program/Policy Implementation

A diverse group of organizations and agencies contribute to farmland protection in St. Mary's County. Significant attention is given both to direct protection of private farmland through conservation easement acquisition, and to economic development support of the agricultural industry itself. This complementary approach is carried out at state and local government levels, as well as with regional organizations and private non-profit initiatives. The approach includes voluntary participation of landowners in statewide programs such as MALPF, and Rural Legacy (both purchase-of-development-rights programs). The County contributes local tax dollars to staffing and easement purchase, as well as enforcing land-use and right-to-farm regulations. County boards such the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board, and the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Commission oversee programs and initiatives with citizen members. The regional Tri-County Council works on agricultural economic development to benefit all of Southern Maryland. The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, a local land trust formed by St. Mary's County residents, solicits and holds conservation easements donated by landowners in exchange for tax benefits. Finally, St. Mary's County is home to a significant number of Amish and Mennonite families who have multi-generational commitments to agriculture.

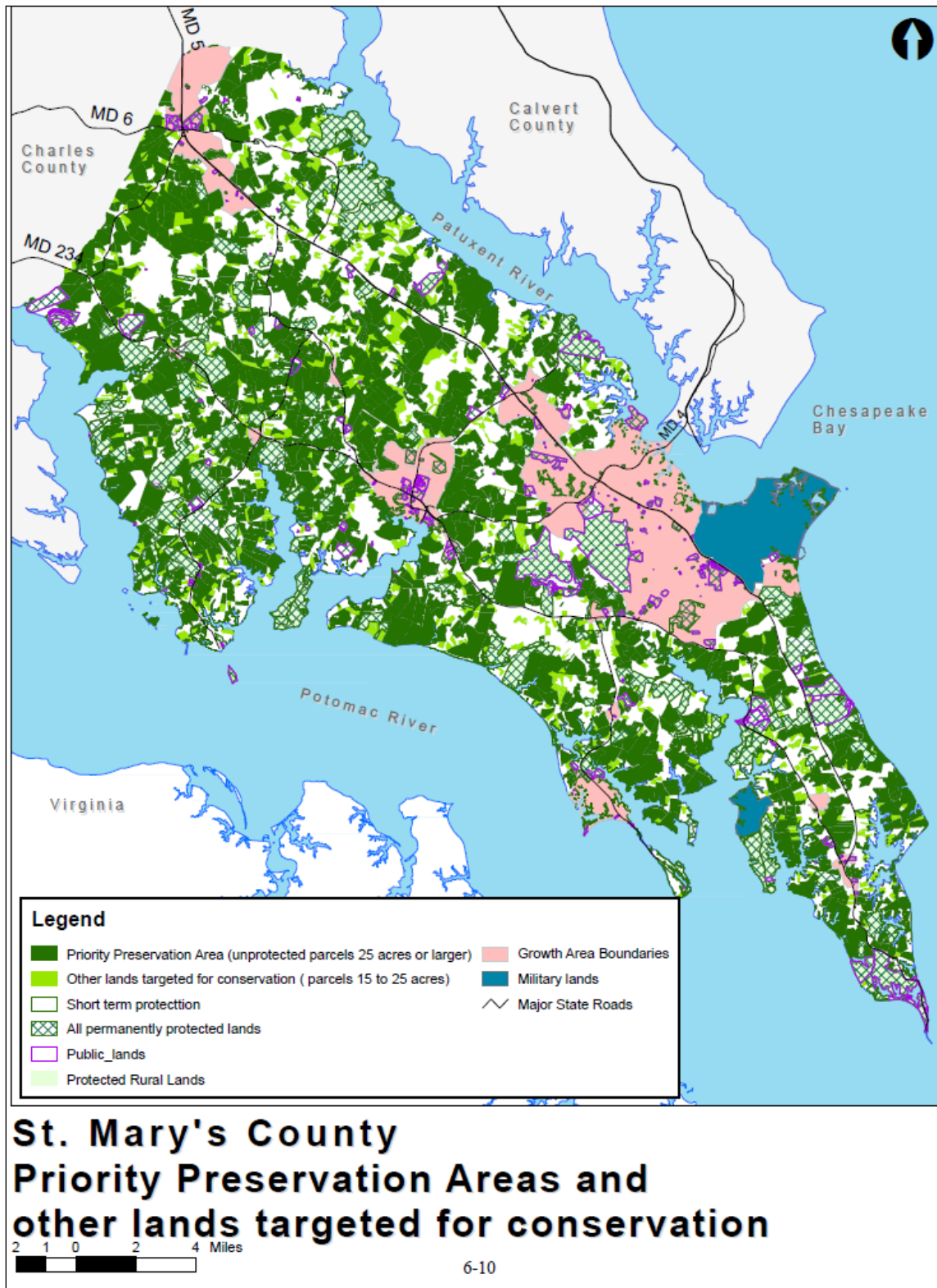
The following is a description of the tools employed by these groups and organizations to preserve farmland, and support the agricultural industry. The chart below summarizes their accomplishments in permanently protecting private lands with conservation easements as of May 2017.

Table 9: Inventory of Protected Lands – as of May 2017

Program	Properties	Acres
MD Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALPF)	116	11,770.5
Rural Legacy Easements	23	4,187.4
Maryland Historical Trust Easements	1	303
Maryland Environmental Trust Easements	13	2,339.4
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust	6	468.5
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Sending sites (large parcels)	50	2,859.1
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Sending sites (environmentally constrained subdivision lots from which TDRs were lifted regardless of parcel/lot size)	326	390
TOTAL	529	22,317.9

Source: St. Mary's County Departments of Economic, Community Development, and Land Use & Growth Management

Map 15: Priority Preservation Area



Source: St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan

Designated Preservation Areas

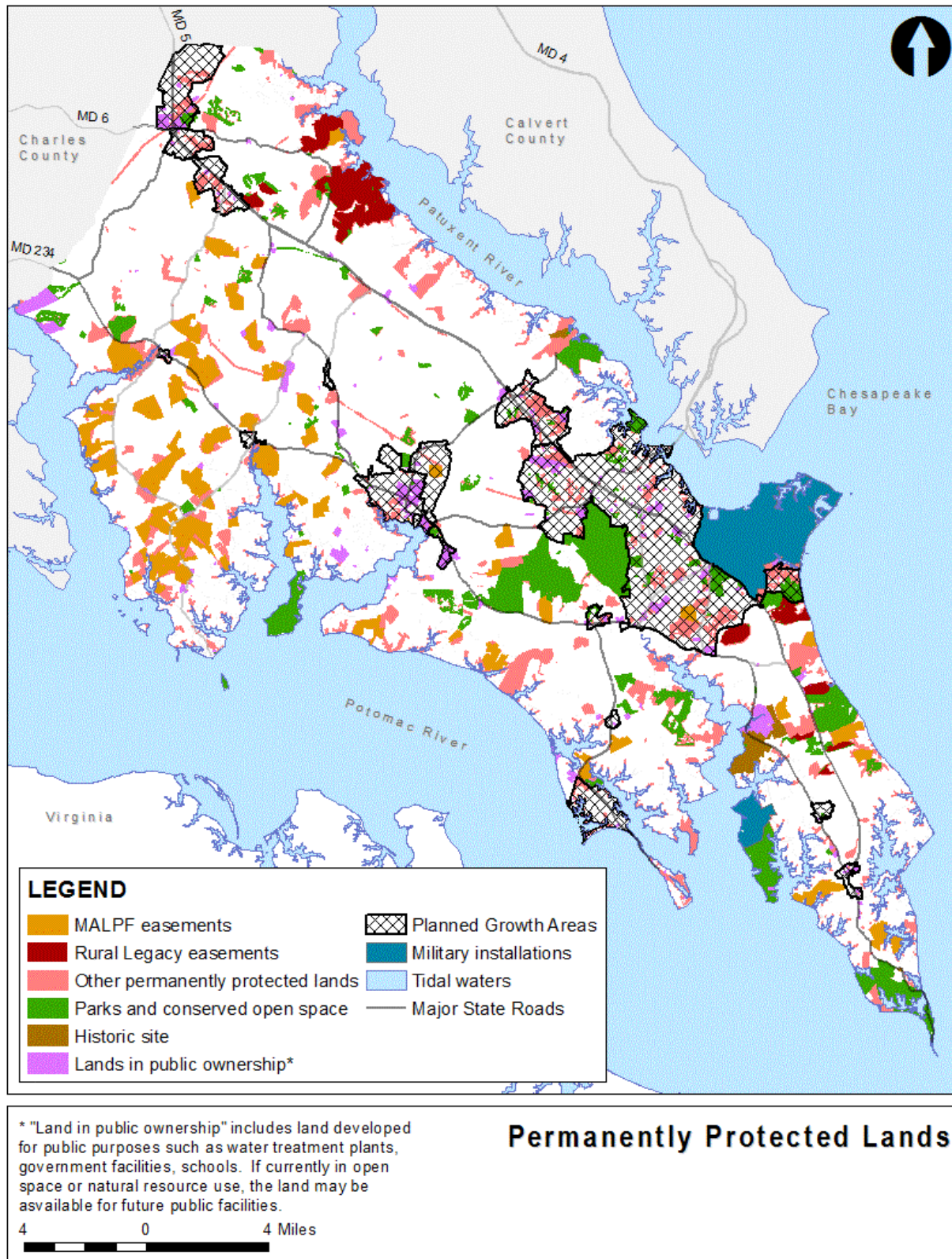
Chapter 6 of the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan established a designated Priority Preservation Area (PPA), and in accordance with state guidelines, anticipates protection of 80% of the designated land using a variety of means. The PPA (illustrated in **Map 15**) is parcel-based, and includes lands of 25 acres or larger located in the Rural Preservation District that were unprotected as of 2010. As of this time, the PPA encompassed 97,660 acres and recognized other lands targeted for conservation (parcels 15 acres to less than 25 acres in size encompassing an additional 14,990 acres), which abut PPA parcels. The lands in the PPA have existing concentrations of profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises, or have the capacity for reestablishing these activities. The PPA and the parcels targeted for conservation are large enough to support commodity crops (predominately corn, wheat, and soybeans), fodder and feed operations, small to medium scale livestock operations, equine operations, and specialty farm operations, including organic farming. The PPA includes lands owned by Amish and Mennonite community members, who are not likely to participate in formal land conservation programs, but whose agrarian heritage is central to their communities, and to the County's rural character. PPA lands also surround existing concentrations of MALPF and Rural Legacy easements, and include many parcels that were enrolled in five-year Agricultural Land Preservation Districts.

The various easement acquisition programs do not, as a rule, compete to preserve the same parcels of land. Property eligibility differs among them, and benefits to landowners vary. However, because conservation easement efforts are often in competition with developers who want to buy the land outright for development, the County updated its TDR program in 2007 to require use of TDRs for all but the first dwelling on a parcel in the Rural Preservation District. Landowners may utilize their own acreage to satisfy the TDR requirement effectively lowering the rural density countywide to one dwelling per ten acres. Outside of Rural Legacy Areas, they may achieve development densities up to one dwelling per three acres, with substantial conservation of land under the TDR program. While the economic downturn reduced overall development pressure, the TDR program change appeared to slow the development of agricultural and resource lands for large rural residential developments, and increased the attractiveness of participation in easement programs. Although the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 limited rural landowners to seven-lot minor subdivisions, it did not negate land preservation contribution at increased rates via the County's TDR program when rural development occurs.

To meet the goal of protecting 80% of the undeveloped land in the PPA, the County must protect a total of 78,130 acres. The limitation for creation of minor lots effectively removed the clustering of rural development on 50% of a parcel, and after accounting for existing protected lands, resulted in an estimated 7,000 possible rural lots at rural-residential buildout. Within the "targeted lands," there will be 11,500 acres of protection provided by ordinance provisions. Currently, approximately 33,984 acres are in permanent agricultural and open space protection outside the PPA. The acreage of planned and existing land preservation in the rural planning districts is 121,660 acres, which is 60% of the total rural area in the County.³ This goal remains valid although the implications of the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 have not yet been fully assessed, this is planned to be accomplished in the next County Comprehensive Plan Update.

³ Note: the PPA acreage figures in this section are consistent with the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and update the figures provided in the County's 2009 application for Agricultural Land Preservation Program recertification.

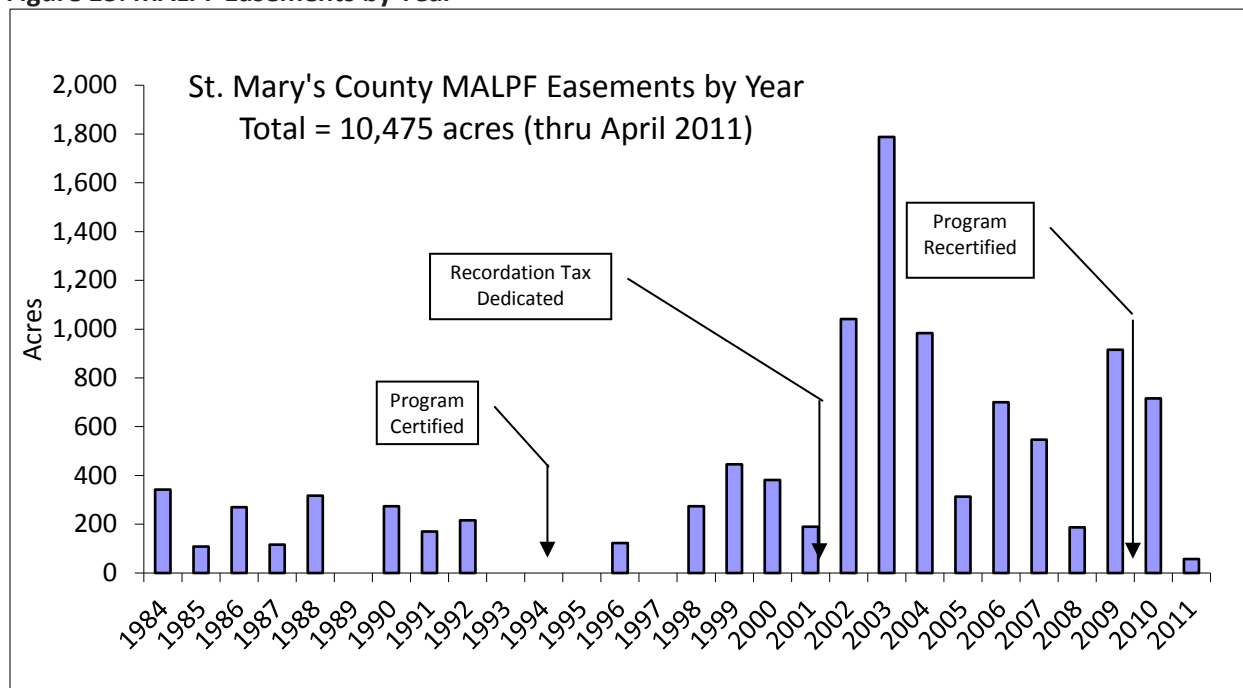
Map 16: Protected Lands as of 2016



Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

St. Mary's County has participated in the MALPF program since 1984. As shown in **Figure 13**, easement purchases have protected significantly more land since 2002. This was due to additional local and state funding sources, including use of a portion of the local recordation tax dedicated in 2001 to agricultural land preservation. Shortage of funding from the state budget, as well as decreases in land transfer tax revenues as land sales have not rebounded from the economic downturn, have resulted in fluctuations in land and easement acquisitions since 2007. However, the County has partnered with the Department of Defense (Navy) through its Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) to fund land preservation easements of mutual interest. In 2010, the County's agricultural land preservation program, originally certified in 1995, was recertified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Planning, enabling St. Mary's County to continue to hold back a larger percentage (75% instead of 33%) of agricultural transfer tax for use as matching funds to leverage state MALPF dollars.

Figure 13: MALPF Easements by Year



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Economic and Community Development

Most MALPF easements are located in the northwest quadrant of the County where farming is the predominant land use. The average price per acre over that last five years has been \$6,261. Interest on the part of landowners in selling easements has always exceeded the availability of funds. A deterrent to acceptance by landowners of easement offers from the State has been the amount of time between application and offer, a process that has taken up to two years in some cases. Landowners have also been discouraged to participate by low MALPF offers that have been tied to low appraisal values prepared by appraisers who are not local and viewed as unfamiliar with local land values. In addition, the State has mandated a cap of easement values to 75% of the appraised value. **Map 16** illustrates the location of all MALPF easements.

Rural Legacy Program

The Rural Legacy Program, run by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), consists of two concepts: first, delineation of a specific geographic area of the County in need of focused land conservation efforts, and second, the acquisition of easements from willing landowners within that area. The County has partnered with the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development to place easements on properties in the Rural Legacy Areas. In 1998, the County established the 5,800-acre Huntersville Rural Legacy Area (HRLA), which was expanded in 2004 to 8,950 acres due to the success of the HRLA and interest among larger landowners in preventing sprawl from Mechanicsville. In 2010, land was removed from the Mechanicsville town center in contemplation of including the down-zoned land in the HRLA. Currently, 14 properties in the HRLA, encompassing 3,029 acres in the Patuxent River watershed, have been protected through the Rural Legacy Program. An additional 603 acres in the HRLA are protected by MALPF, MET, and the TDR program, bringing the total land preserved in the 8,360 acre HRLA to approximately 3,632 acres. This represents 65% of the original RLA, and 40% of the expanded RLA.

In 2006, the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area (MRLA), which encompasses 13,703 acres, was established with the aim to protect 6,500 acres with Rural Legacy funds, and an additional 2,000 acres by other means, for a total of 8,500 acres (62% of the MRLA). The Commissioners of St. Mary's County purchased the first property preserved in this Rural Legacy Area, referred to as the Fenwick Property. This site is now home to a thriving Home Grown Farm Market. Currently, nine properties in the MRLA encompassing over 4,187 acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have been protected through the Rural Legacy Program. An additional 1,107 acres in the MRLA are protected by MALPF, MET, and the TDR program, bringing the total land preserved in the 13,703 acre MRLA to approximately 5,294 acres. In the near future the Mattapany Rural Legacy area is seeking to be expanded to incorporate parcels that had been outside the RLA but can take advantage of Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funds from the Navy. Preserving agriculture areas adjacent but outside of the rural legacy area is beneficial for preserving contiguous tracts of farm and forest lands.

Land Trusts/ Maryland Environmental Trust

Local land trusts are non-profit organizations created by interested citizens to accept, monitor, and enforce conservation easements donated by landowners in exchange for significant tax benefits. The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, and Southern Maryland Resource and Conservation Development Inc. partner with St. Mary's County as sponsors of Rural Legacy Area proposals and solicitors of purchased easements. In the Huntersville and Mattapany RLAs, the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust and Southern Maryland Resource and Conservation "co-hold" easements with the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), the statewide quasi-public land trust, and the Department of Defense (when REPI funds are used).

Funding for Easement Acquisition

Placing conservation easements on private land from willing owners is the chief mechanism for permanently protecting agricultural land in St. Mary's County. The vast majority of these easements have been purchased through MALPF or Rural Legacy with the State of Maryland providing the majority of needed funding (**Figure 14**). Local funds used to match state dollars are generated from a number of sources including:

Agricultural Transfer Tax

When agricultural land in Maryland is sold for development, a small percentage of the transaction value is paid to recapture, in part, the preferential taxation rate to which the land was subject during its previous agricultural use. Part of the revenue collected is forwarded to the State, and part remains with the County to be used only for farmland preservation. As St. Mary's County has an agricultural preservation program certified by Maryland Department of Planning and Maryland Department of Agriculture, it may hold back 75% of revenues collected to be used to purchase easements within three years. The County applies these funds to its match of State funds in the MALPF program. In the long run, this source of revenue is self-limiting, because as the amount of farmland diminishes, so does the tax on conversion to non-agricultural use. Conversely, increased collection of agricultural transfer tax funds indicates rapid loss of the farmland this money is meant to protect.

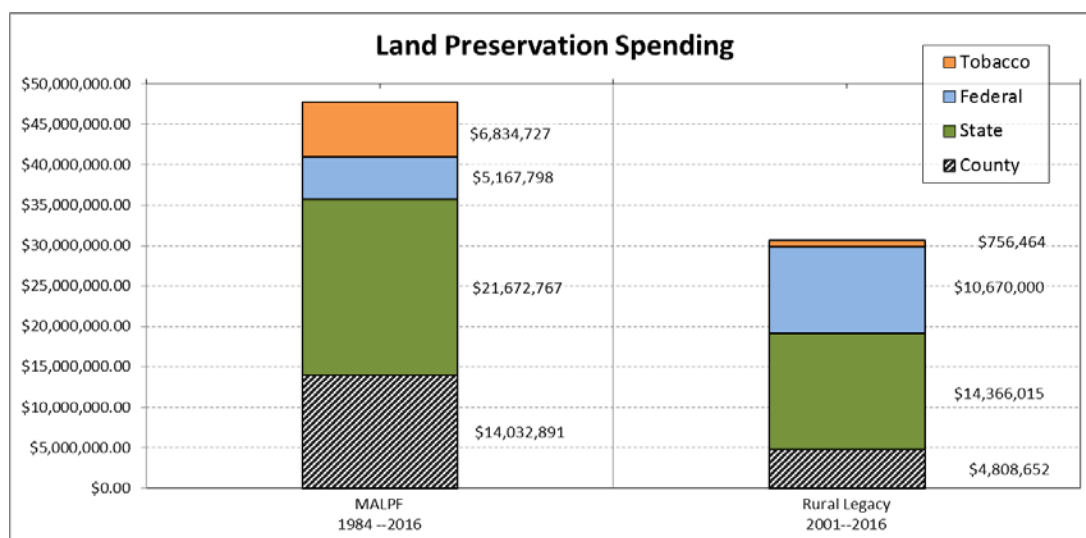
Recordation Tax

In 2001, St. Mary's County increased the recordation tax, a tax paid when documents are recorded with the Clerk of the Circuit Court. At the same time, the County dedicated a portion of that revenue to "conserve and protect rural lands" specifically noting, "the purchase of development rights that will preserve agricultural lands." This revenue source adds varying amounts each year to the County's contribution to land protection.

TDR Fees-In Lieu Funds

In lieu of purchasing development rights from a sending parcel for use in development of a receiving parcel, a person may pay a fee to the County, which the County holds in a separate Open Lands Trust Fund for use in purchasing development rights from owners of sending parcels and other related purposes as defined in the subsections below. A schedule of the "in lieu of" fees for the Open Lands Trust is established annually at least 120% of the average fair market value paid for TDRs in "arms-length" intermediate transactions in the previous fiscal year, as calculated by the County Department of Economic Development Director. The Commissioners of the County reserve the right to increase or decrease the fee in lieu. Those applicants who pay the fee in lieu may apply credits received for said payments to develop land in a receiving parcel at an additional density or intensity of use through the same provision as TDRs. Payments received by the County as fees in lieu of purchasing development rights from sending zones are used by the St. Mary's County Agricultural Preservation Commission to acquire property having high agricultural value or to replenish the Critical Farms Programs. Such purchase of development rights may be resold by the County. As of June 2011, the fee-in-lieu program had collected \$234,000.

Figure 14: Land Preservation Spending



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Economic and Community Development

Discretionary Local Funds and Bonds

In addition to the agricultural transfer tax and portion of the recordation tax, which are required by law to be spent on land preservation, St. Mary's County has also contributed money from the County's General Fund, the local Transfer Tax, and the sale of bonds to augment both the MALPF Program and Rural Legacy. These amounts have varied over time, based on fiscal conditions in the County budget.

Federal Funds

Since 1998, the Federal government has made relatively small amounts of funding available for the purchase of development rights on farmland through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service's Farmland Preservation Program. However, since 2013, the County has partnered with the Department of Defense's REPI program to target and fund land purchases and easements on farm and forest lands. Another new potential source of funding is an active effort led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for creation of a Patuxent Waters Conservation Area. If approved (2017 approval projected), this program could make new federal funds available for purchase of conservation easements on farm and natural resource lands that are significant wildlife habitats in the Coastal Plan region. It is anticipated that funds from this program may be matched with funds from other federal programs, as well as from local, state, and private sources.

Agricultural Districts

St. Mary's County offers a tax credit to landowners who enroll in the County Agricultural District Program, which requires a five-year commitment from the landowner to refrain from developing their land without a provision for creating children's lots or agricultural subdivisions. Landowners in these districts receive a 100% credit on the County portion of their tax bill for their agriculturally assessed land and farm buildings. After five years, they can renew or dissolve agreement. If they do not fulfill the five-year commitment, they must repay the credited taxes plus interest and penalties. The Program has had success, and County now has 14,058 acres in 115 County Districts.

Land Use Management Authority

a. Zoning

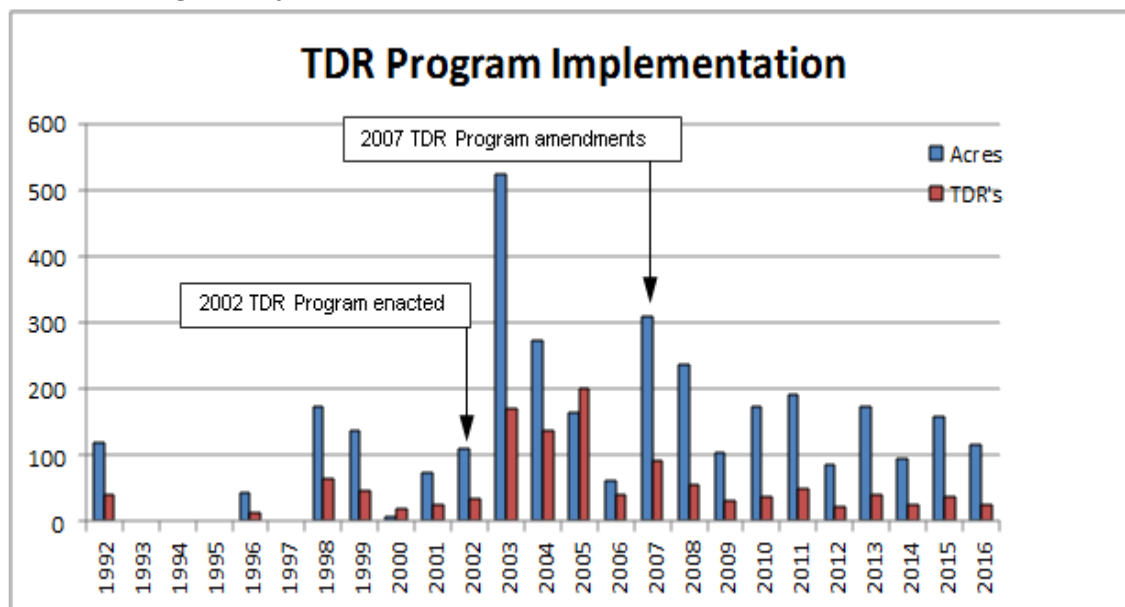
The vast majority of the acreage in St. Mary's County that lies outside of the development districts and priority funding areas is zoned as Rural Preservation District (RPD). The RPD is approximately 178,000 acres, and virtually all of the County's permanently protected private lands are located within it. The purpose of this district is "to foster agricultural, forestry, mineral resource extraction, and aquaculture uses, and protect the land base necessary to support these activities." Residential development is permitted at a density of one dwelling unit per five acres (1:5) with provisions to achieve 1:3 outside of Rural Legacy Areas, subject to the landowner's purchase of transferred development rights (TDRs) for the additional units. Major subdivisions (greater than seven lots) must cluster development on 50% or less of the parent parcel.

b. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

St. Mary's County has adopted a unique TDR program. From 1992 through 2002, the program was similar to traditional programs, and was minimally used. In 2002, the TDR program, and base zoning regulations, were revised. This increased the need for TDRs, and allowed for the retirement of environmentally constrained RPD lots. **Figure 15** illustrates the significant increase in the implementation of TDRs after 2002.

The large number of TDRs lifted in relation to the amount of land protected from 2002 to 2007 reflects the retirement of numerous small, grandfathered lots on which development was difficult or impossible due to severe environmental constraints. The 2002 TDR program changes increased the need and ability to use TDRs in growth areas, but did not adequately reduce rural development or protect larger tracts of rural land. It also placed most of the financial burden for rural land protection on landowners. A 2007 amendment of the TDR program simplified calculation of TDRs, mandated use of TDRs, and required retirement of land, or payment of a fee-in-lieu, for all but the first development right on a rural parcel, eliminated the buyback provision, and specified allowed uses on TDR-protected parcels. Current zoning allows the RPD base density of one dwelling per five acres (at the cost of one TDR per unit) to be increased, and outside of the Rural Legacy Areas zoning now allows for up to one unit per three acres. Those units above base density require an increased number of TDRs per unit, which is intended to increase overall land protection.

Figure 15: TDR Program Implementation



Source: St. Mary's County Dept. of Economic and Community Development

Since the 2007 TDR program revisions, major RPD subdivisions (with more than seven lots per parcel) has nearly halted. The lifting of TDRs has continued at a moderate pace, with greater land area protected per TDR and more total acres protected than prior to 2007. Buildout of existing rural lots has continued at a moderate pace, and subdivision of larger lots for family members continues. Modest rural growth can continue at a manageable pace with the use of the TDRs, which is anticipated to continue the steady protection farmland without the use of public funding. The TDR fee-in-lieu funds are collected (at an amount equal to at least 125% fair market value) to maintain the market value of TDRs.

c. Right-to-Farm

The County's zoning regulations contain general right-to-farm provisions for landowners in the RPD. Since agriculture, aquaculture, and silviculture are the preferred land uses in the District, the ordinance attempts to limit "the circumstances under which agriculture and forestry operations may be deemed to interfere with the reasonable use and enjoyment of adjacent land."

Farming Assistance Programs

St. Mary's County participates in the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). SMADC focuses on land preservation in Southern Maryland, agribusiness development, and outreach to help area farmers grow and thrive. The following initiatives are part of SMADC's outreach/education program:

- **SMADC Grant Programs:** Targeted grants provide help for farms transitioning into new agricultural ventures that would otherwise be perceived as risky and/or cost-prohibitive. Grants have been provided to the St. Mary's County and Prince Georges County Farm Bureaus to purchase freezer trailers and refrigerated cases to promote the purchase of local meats. Grants have also been provided to purchase conservation equipment and specialized equipment for vegetable production.

- *Retaining and Recruiting New Farmers:* SMADC's Maryland FarmLINK provides mechanisms for farmland transfer, mentoring connections, and business partnerships for current and future farmers. Maryland FarmLINK strives to keep Maryland farmland in agricultural usage via a property exchange function that allows farmers to list farmland for sale. It also includes a farmer forum and a "person to person" feature to connect farmers, and future farmers, with mentors, apprentices, etc.
- *Resources, Networking and Education/Training for Farmers:* A seminar and conference program, interactive web sites, and various networking events are all part of SMADC's extensive efforts to provide farmers with tools to help their operations. Resource links on the web site provide information like a Step-by-Step Acidified Foods Guide and listings of farm equipment for rent.
- *Access to Fresh and Local Food:* SMADC works with farmers markets, hospitals, schools, and other institutions to expand access to fresh and local farm foods. Public Outreach and Education: Creative and adaptive marketing and outreach programs are changing consumers' buying habits. Programs like *So Maryland, So Good* help consumers "find the farms that fit their needs." *The Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination* connects farms, the arts, and the broader cultural tourism community. The annual *Buy Local Challenge* highlights the value of local farms to our families, our communities, and our planet.
- *Educating the Next Generation:* Today's young people are tomorrow's farmers, and tomorrow's educated and healthy consumers. SMADC's children's programs teach children about farms, give them access to locally grown foods, and bring future farmers together to interact and learn. Programs like *Cornelia and the Farm Band* teach children about the diversity and importance of farms to the economy, to our nation's health and safety, and to an active, healthy lifestyle.

St. Mary's County sponsors three retail farmers markets – one in Charlotte Hall, another in California, and the third in Lexington Park. The County is in the process of relocating the Charlotte Hall Farmers Market to a larger location. In addition, Sotterley and Jubilee Farms sponsor their own farmers markets. Farm stands are also set up weekly at the Governmental Center Complex and the St. Mary's County Hospital to make local produce available to County staff and public in these locations. Additionally, the County assisted the Mennonite Community in setting up a wholesale produce auction in Loveville, and assisted the local Amish Community in setting up the first cheese dairy in St. Mary's County. The County has also assisted other local farmers to license their business to process farm foods including meat, baked goods, acidified foods such as beets and relish, and jams and jellies. The County also worked with a local farmer in establishing a USDA approved mobile slaughterhouse facility, and is in the process of helping another local meat producer seek USDA approval for a new on-site facility.

D. Evaluation of Agricultural Land Preservation Program/Policy Implementation

Overall Preservation Strategy

St. Mary's County's overall preservation strategy contains all of the elements to be effective in securing a land base for the agricultural industry, and in doing so, protect the heritage and rural character of the County.

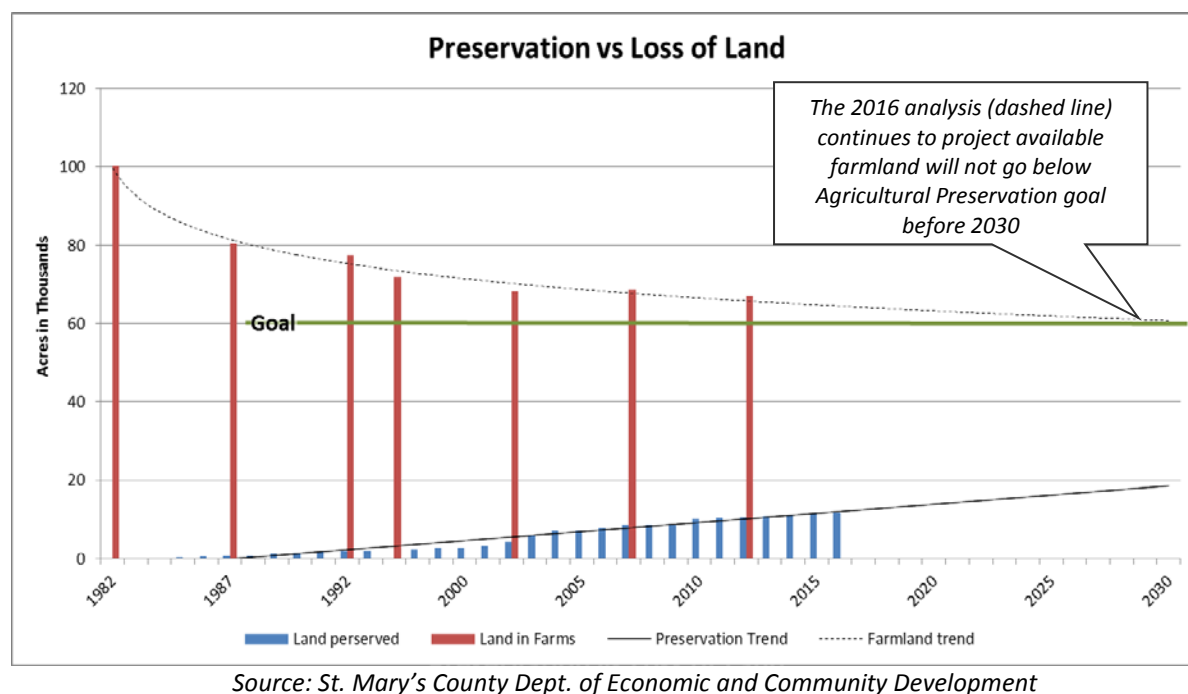
In 2010, the County adopted the Priority Preservation Element in the Comprehensive Plan. Its intent is to broadly protect farmland and forests in all areas outside of designated growth areas. Rather than designating a geographic focus of all program and policy implementation, the County believes that landowners who desire to continue farming and forestry operations should be eligible for programs that increase the likelihood of meeting shared goals.

The 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan retains an Agricultural District Overlay, Rural Legacy Areas, and a Natural Resource Focus Area. Designation of these areas allows the County to pursue federal, state, and other sources of funding to assist in implementing programs that work to preserve St. Mary's agricultural heritage and rural character.

Funding

Local sources of revenue have increased in recent years with the initiation of the recordation tax, with the intention of creating a larger and more consistent level of funding compared to other sources. The recordation tax augments the funds coming from the agricultural transfer tax. However, recordation tax funds replaced contributions from the general fund, local transfer tax contributions, and bonding, which are less frequently used now in funding agricultural land preservation than in previous years. The addition of federal REPI funds has the potential to double land preservation efforts in the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area. With the exception of MALPF, REPI funds can be matched by County contributions from a wide variety of other funding sources.

Figure 16: 2011 Trends: Preservation vs. Loss of Land in Farms

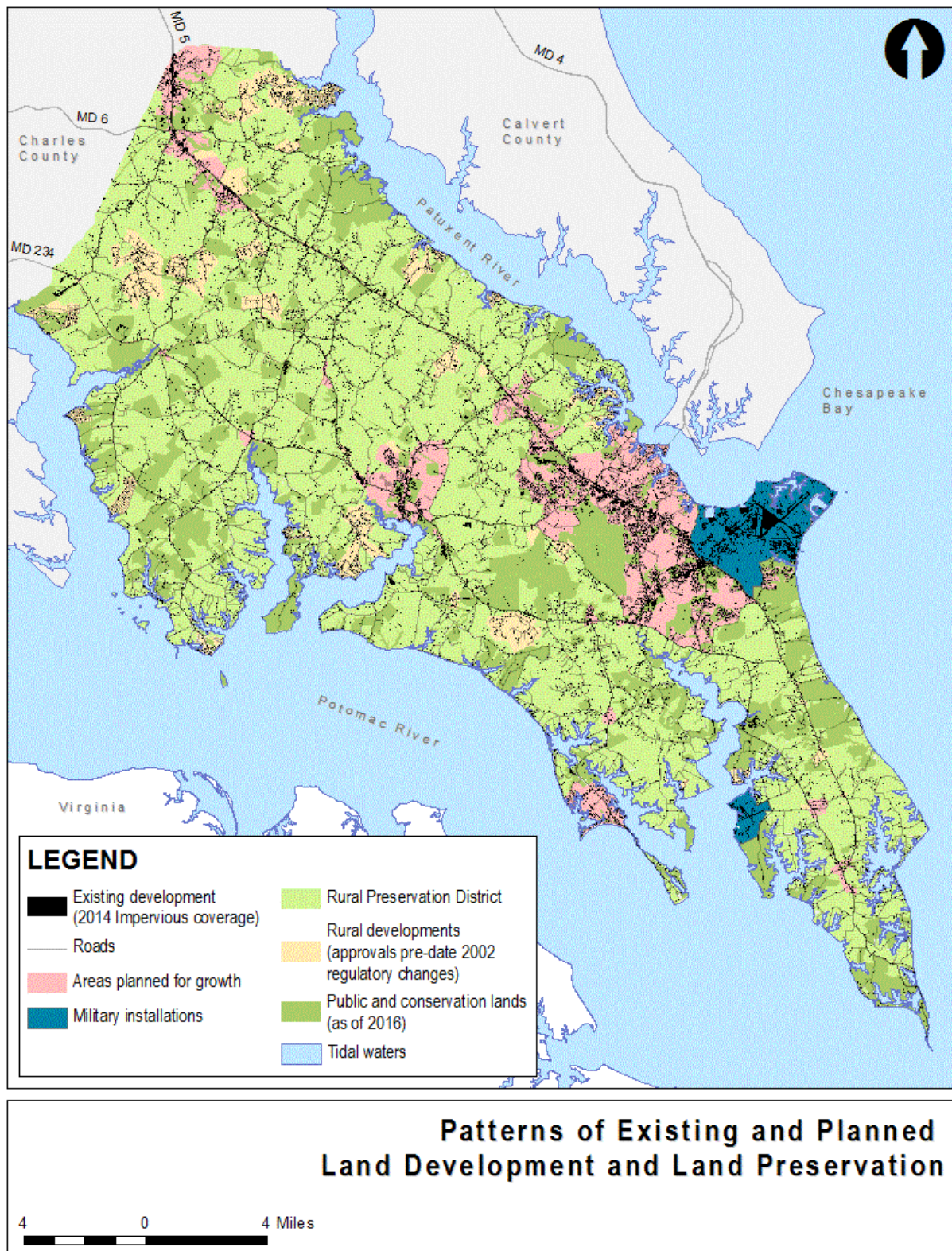


Land Use Management Tools

Between 2005 and 2007, when the County examined the intention of the rural preservation district (RPD) to protect the land base for the natural resource-based industries in the County, a look at the actual and location of residential lots suggested that zoned density and transfer of development rights (TDRs) had done little to direct growth away from areas intended for preservation, and that residential development continued to be scattered across the rural landscape creating conflicts with farm and forestry economic activities. This and other planning analysis efforts combined with the concern by County citizens prompted changes to the TDR to establish open space conservation requirements for development, and to establish Rural Subdivision design standards to preserve farm and forest land and minimize impacts from development on agricultural and forestry operations on minimally developed rural parcels 15 acres or greater in size.

The TDR program changes were positive, and the program became successful. It is now a key tool for land conservation in St. Mary's County. TDR program changes limited rural by-right development to the first dwelling and require one TDR for each additional dwelling on a parcel developed, up to one dwelling per five acres base density, and with TDRs required in excess of the base density. The revised TDR program more evenly distributed the financial costs and rewards for rural development among landowners. Those who want to develop can do so, but the market for TDRs was expanded so that those who do not wish to develop have a demand for their TDRs. The program also allows a landowner to use his own development right to create lots to supplement farm income, or provide lots for homes for family on the farm or forested tract.

Map 17: 2016 Patterns of Land Development and Land Preservation



The mandatory open space provisions for major subdivisions in the RPD and RL zones ensured that when a site is developed with more than five lots, a minimum of 50% of the parcel is set aside as a contiguous block of open space. They also require an increase in development density proportionate to the proposed number of units to be developed; as more units are proposed, the lot sizes for the units must decrease. Criteria require that a high percentage of the prime farm and forestry soils must be protected in this open space.

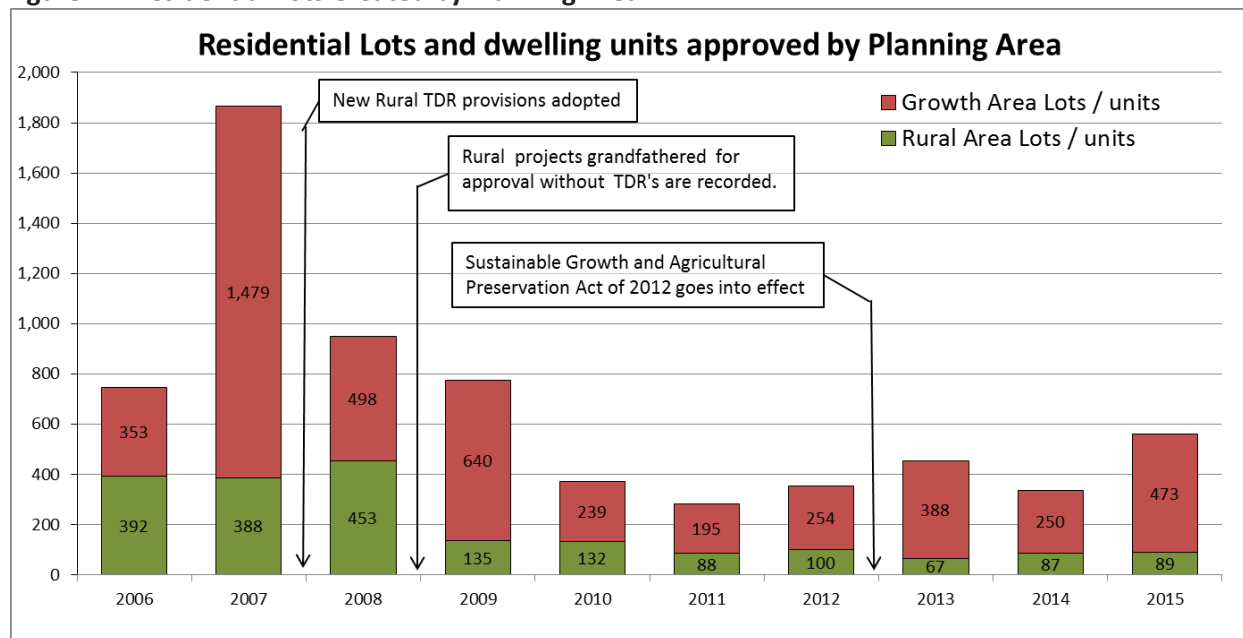
In 2010, Zoning Ordinance changes established rural subdivision design criteria for major subdivisions in the RPD to conserve productive farmland and minimize the impacts of proposed developments on farm operations. Other 2010 Zoning Ordinance amendments addressed the following items, which allowed for new types of agricultural activities in the County that are assisting local farmers diversify operations and better secure the local farm economy:

- Define “agritourism”
- Allow for the operation of wineries and equestrian facilities
- Expand programs to support local production of value-added farm products

The Right-to-Farm provisions in the Zoning Ordinance provided clear definitions, processes, and a proactive approach to potential land use conflicts.

Lots created since 2007 have been concentrated in growth areas (**Figure 17**). Rural residential development (lots less than 15 acres) has traditionally occurred in large subdivisions or clustered along existing rural roads (most platted and developed prior to 1990). The County has applied land preservation efforts broadly outside of development districts to ensure that rural character and economies remain functional across the entire rural areas (**Map 17**).

Figure 17: Residential Lots Created by Planning Area



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

Combined Performance of Preservation Tools

At the beginning of the last decade, St. Mary's County, Maryland was losing agricultural land at a high rate. Many local farms had traditionally farmed tobacco and found it difficult to remain in operation, or to diversify their operations, after the implementation of the State's tobacco buy-out program. This (combined with residential growth in the Washington metropolitan area and expansion of operations at Naval Air Station Patuxent River) created a ready market for new homes, and much rural land was lost to new subdivisions. Between 1987 and 2002, the county lost 15% of its active farmland, roughly 12,000 acres. Determined to save its agricultural heritage, the community came together, creating a Rural Preservation Task Force. Between 2002 and 2010, the County implemented a number of land use reforms that curbed the residential development of agricultural lands.

The latest available data indicates that the overall acreage of agricultural land in St. Mary's County has remained relatively steady; however, the value of local farm products has increased. The County accomplished this turn-around with six tools, each of which reinforces the overall program: strong rural zoning, a transferable development rights program, an institutionalizing funding for land preservation, a growth management policy, a "right to farm" ordinance, and zoning incentives for new forms of agriculture.

- *Most of the County has been zoned for rural preservation.* Eighty percent (80%) of land in St. Mary's County is in a rural preservation zone where agriculture is the preferred use. Only one dwelling unit can be built by-right on a parcel of land, regardless of its size. Additional dwellings can only be built by purchasing transferable development rights. Subdivisions must be designed to protect prime soils for continued farming, buffer farming operations from houses, and protect rural character.
- *Transferable development rights (TDRs) are used to reduce future development in the rural zone.* Owners of rural land are encouraged to extinguish development rights by selling them to developers. Residential development in the rural area (above one unit per parcel) requires the use of TDRs. Development in non-rural areas can increase density by purchasing TDRs from rural properties. The result is a win-win for farmers. If they wish to continue farming, they can sell TDRs from their land and receive cash. If they wish to develop their land, they have to purchase TDRs from other farmers who thereby give up the right to develop or use TDRs from their own parcel thus reducing overall parcel buildout. Eventually, the TDR program is intended to extinguish all non-agricultural development in the rural zone. Along with other easement programs, the County expects to preserve 122,000 acres, which is more than half of its land mass.
- *Mechanisms to generate funding for land conservation programs are built into the land development process.* The County dedicates 0.5% of the recording tax from property sales as a source of funding for land preservation programs. Within the TDR program, the County established a fee-in-lieu option, which provides a source of funds for easement purchase. As development permitting increases, the amount of funding for land conservation also increases.
- *The amount of development in the rural zone is rationed on a year-by-year basis.* The County limits residential growth countywide to about 2% per year, with only 30% of growth permitted to occur in the rural zone. This limits the amount of growth in the rural area and steers most development to non-rural areas. Use of this tool has not been necessary recently, and the County has suspended this policy until development pressure makes it necessary again.

- *A strong right-to-farm ordinance was adopted.* Agriculture is established by law as the “preferred land use” in the rural zone. To ensure that the farmer’s ability to continue farming will not be compromised by residential subdivisions, farms are given a protected right to:
 - Conduct normal agricultural operations.
 - Operate farm machinery at any hour.
 - Emit agricultural noise and odors.
 - Sell farm products directly from the farm.

To build community understanding of the right-to-farm law, a notice outlining its provisions is given to every purchaser of real estate, and is mailed annually to all residents with their tax bill. People who move to the rural area are thereby placed on notice that farming operations are a protected aspect of the rural community they have joined.

- *The County helps farmers find new sources of farm income.* Market forces have reduced the profitability of many traditional farm products in the County. Grain production is less profitable than in the past, and tobacco production is almost extinct. Farmers need new ways to farm. Zoning ordinance revisions and other County policies seek to achieve the following:
 - Establishment of vineyards and wineries in the rural zone.
 - Promote construction and operation of stables and equestrian centers.
 - Establish new farmers’ markets and farm auction houses.
 - Promote local farm products through “Buy local” campaigns.
 - Assist County farmers to market their products locally and in the region.

While each element of the strategy is important, the real genius of the St. Mary’s County program is the contemporaneous implementation of all six measures. Working together, the measures have nearly stopped the loss of farmland and bolstered the agricultural economy. This occurred even though development pressures were extremely high during the 2002-2006 real estate boom. Key to the County’s success was the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including those who comprise the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board. The Board members consist of local farmers, developers, environmentalists, and other community representatives, with support from the County Department of Land Use and Growth Management, Department of Economic Development, and Commissioners of St. Mary’s County.

Effects of Potential Development on Land Markets

No studies have been done in St. Mary’s County to measure the impact of development on land markets, but it is widely known that land prices have remained high in part due to the development pressure resulting from the growth of Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The County has acted to limit pressure for rural development through the TDR program and the annual growth policies discussed above.

Farming Assistance Programs

The County's farming assistance activities are vigorous, diverse, and bolstered by the regional approach of the Tri-County Council. These partners include the Soil Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Farm Services Agency, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The County's Department of Economic Development's Agriculture and Seafood Division coordinates activities that support the local agricultural industry. Some of the recent farm land preservation activities managed by the Division included:

- Local Efforts – Provided staff support to the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board.
- Agricultural Land Tax Credit – Assisted landowners in enrolling 114 parcels for the St. Mary's County Agricultural Land Preservation 5-Year District Agreement tax credit. This represents 13,908 acres with a cost to the County (or savings to landowners) of approximately \$43,500.
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program (MALPF) – Assisted landowners in enrolling in the program. This included application assistance, coordination with the Soil Conservation District to qualify the farms for participation, presenting application information to the local Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board and the St. Mary's County Planning Commission, preparing legal notices, and the conducting public hearings before the Board of County Commissioners.
- Rural Legacy – Conducted research and provided staff support in helping the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust make application for two Rural Legacy grants. The Division continues to assist the Land Trust in the easement acquisition and grant applications.
- St. Mary's County Farmers' Market – Over 50 farmers currently participate in St. Mary's County Farmers' Markets located in Charlotte Hall, California, and Lexington Park, with over \$1 million annual economic activity estimated to be generated at the markets.
- Southern Maryland Wine Growers Cooperative – The Division continued to support the Southern Maryland Wine Growers Cooperative and its venture at the Port of Leonardtown Winery.
- Loveville Produce Auction – Staff continued to work with the Mennonite based Loveville Produce Auction to market the auction.
- Right to Farm Ordinance – The St. Mary's County Right to Farm Ordinance was updated in 2011 to further support the County's commitment to its agricultural heritage.

Summary

The loss of farmland has essentially reached an equilibrium, and the County experienced a small decrease in actively farmed land between 2007 and 2012. While the economic slowdown of past years reduced development pressure, the County believes that appropriate measures have been put in place to prevent future conversion of vast portions of the Rural Preservation District to suburban home sites, and to support existing and future agricultural economic activity. Together, these efforts are intended continue the trend toward meeting County goals for agricultural land preservation and retaining farm and forestry as important components of the County's economy and character.

E. Program Development Strategy for Agricultural Land Preservation

There are a number of steps that could be taken to achieve the County's goals for farmland protection, and to protect the public investment already made in easement purchases, including:

Agricultural Land Preservation Goal

Analysis of the TDR program, open space requirements, and current land protection programs has confirmed that the County's current goal of 60,000 acres adopted in 1995, as part of its agricultural land preservation certification is a realistic, achievable goal for permanent protection of land actively farmed or in managed woodland in St. Mary's County. Agricultural land preservation goals for 2017 largely intentionally mirror goals established by the County in its 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. These goals for preservation are lofty and designed to be implemented over a long period of time. The achievement of land use and financial goals was hampered by the sluggish real estate market, economic recession, and reduction in available funding resources that impacted the country beginning in approximately 2008. However, as the County budget situation has stabilized, funding of farm land preservation has become economically viable again.

Land Use

- The county has designated a Priority Preservation Area (all unprotected RPD parcels greater than 25 acres as of 2009) with a secondary focus on adjacent parcels that are at least 15 to 25 acres in size. The County also established an Agricultural Focus area to target funding for preserving parcels. However, future improvements to consider include:
 - Enact a local PDR program with the goal of:
 - ♦ Creating a nimble tool to allow the County to act in pursuing preservation opportunities than the current MALPF program allows.
 - ♦ Leverage funds to buy easements while the land is still available. Consider another dedicated revenue source, the establishment of an installment purchase agreements, or zero coupon bonds, and direct funds toward actions to meet PPA goals.
 - Explore the possibility of a local land trust acting as an intermediary with the Amish and Mennonite communities to conserve lands without direct government action or participation. Considering reviewing the work of the Lancaster Land Trust in Pennsylvania, which has been successful in working with these communities (www.savelancasterfarms.org).
- Conduct annual reviews of development in the Rural Preservation District (RPD), and consider additional zoning ordinance revisions to further protect agricultural land and operations in the RPD as determined necessary.
- Continue to preserve the farmable land-base in areas outside the agricultural preservation area, through the creation of new rural legacy areas, or use of other land conservation measures.

Financial, Business, and Regulatory

Demand to sell agricultural easements exceeds available funding through the MALPF program. This resource limitation stifles the County's work to achieve goals for permanent agricultural land preservation. Areas for improvement to consider include:

- Increase State funding for the MALPF program consistent with the final report of the Task Force to Study the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (Final Report January 2005). Interest on the part of landowners in selling easements has consistently exceeded program funding. Increased funding would enable the County to increase its pace of easement acquisition, and the County believes MALPF revert to use of an annual easement cycle instead of biannual. In addition, the cap on the number of applicants from each County should either be eliminated or increased so that all matching funds from a County can be utilized as high quality preservation projects are identified. In addition to increasing State funding the MALPF program should address outstanding challenges that prohibit its funds to be matched with those from the federal REPI funding program, and USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).
- Revise the MALPF program to remove disincentives to participation, including long timelines for completing agreements, appraisal methodologies, and the lack of inclusion of certain farm practices participants consider a by-right activity in MALPF agreements.
- Continue to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow auxiliary commercial enterprises on farms. These types of businesses are an integral part of the Mennonite and Amish communities, which are, in turn, critical to St. Mary's County agriculture.

Appendix A: Statewide Goals

State Goals for Parks and Recreation

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
2. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, play, and visit.
3. Use state investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
4. To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
5. Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
6. Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

State Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation

1. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
2. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources, and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.
3. To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources, and resource-based industries.
4. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.
5. Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating state agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
6. Work with local governments to achieve the following:
 - a. Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and compliment state goals.
 - b. In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategies to achieve them among rural land owners, the public, and state and local government officials.
 - c. Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs.
 - d. Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.
 - e. Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and public-at-large.

State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

1. Identify, protect, and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
 - a. Public land acquisition and stewardship.
 - b. Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs.
 - c. Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.
 - d. Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands.
 - e. Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects.
 - f. Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.
2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).
3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.).
4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.
5. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.
6. Assess the combined ability of the state and local programs to achieve the following:
 - a. Expand and connect forests, farmland, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
 - b. Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
 - c. Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions.
 - d. Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production.
 - e. Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

Appendix B: St. Mary's County Demographic Profile

Gaining a clear understanding of the existing and projected demographic character of the County is an important component of the planning process for the update of St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. For example, if the population of young children was steadily on the rise and existing public recreation facilities for young children, such as playgrounds, were barely meeting existing user demand, then the County may want to consider targeting investments to meet the increasing needs of this growing segment of the population.

Key areas were analyzed to identify current demographic statistics and trends that can impact the planning and provision of public parks and recreation services in St. Mary's County. Community characteristics analyzed and discussed consist of:

- Existing and projected total population
- Age distribution
- Ethnic/Racial diversity
- Household information
- Educational attainment
- Employment
- State and County Health Ranking

This demographic profile was completed using the most updated information available (as of August 2016) from the Maryland Department of Planning's State Data Center, including U.S. Census Bureau data, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey, and the Department of Planning's estimates and future projections. In several categories studied, the most current data available is from 2014. A summary of demographic highlights is noted in **Table 10** below, followed by a more detailed demographic analysis.

Table 10: 2014 St. Mary's County General Demographic Profile

Population	108,472
Median Age	36.1
Households	37,947
Median Household Income	\$88,190

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Key general demographic comparisons – Local, State, and National:

- The median age of St. Mary's County residents was 36.1 years, lower than the median age for Maryland (38.1) and the United States (37.4).
- The median household income for St. Mary's County residents in 2014 was estimated to be \$88,190. This is higher than both the statewide (\$74,149) and national (\$53,482) median household incomes.

- St. Mary's County's 2014 population was almost evenly split between male (49.8%) and female (50.2%) residents. The populations of Maryland, and the United States, are also roughly evenly divided between the sexes.

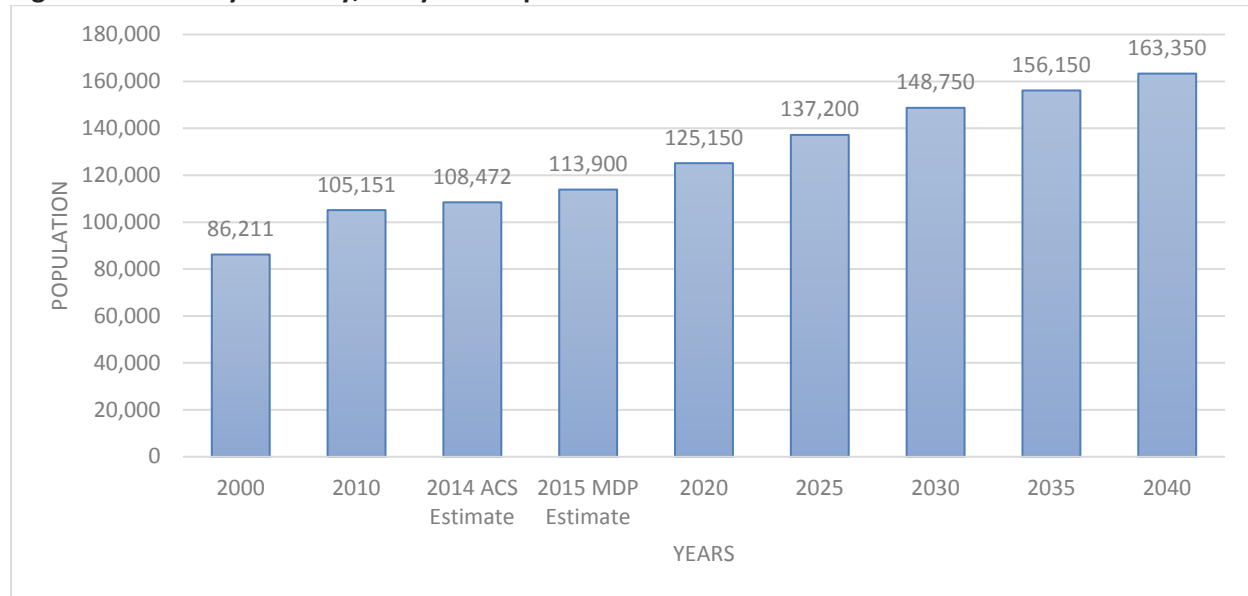
St. Mary's County Population and Demographic Trends

Population Projections

Although future population growth cannot be predicted with certainty, it is helpful to make growth projections for planning purposes. **Figure 18** contains actual population figures based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census for St. Mary's County, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2014 estimated population, the estimated 2015 population from the Maryland Department of Planning, and population projections from the Maryland Department of Planning through 2040. Based on this data and future projections, the population of the County is increasing rapidly. Chronologically, the following population growth rates have been projected for the County, with the exception of the period between 2000 and 2010, for which the growth rate has been recorded:

- 2000 to 2010 – population increase of 22% recorded
- 2000 to 2040 – overall population increase of 90% projected
- 2015 to 2025 – population increase of 20% projected
- 2025 to 2035 – population increase of 14% projected

Figure 18: St. Mary's County, Maryland Population Growth Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

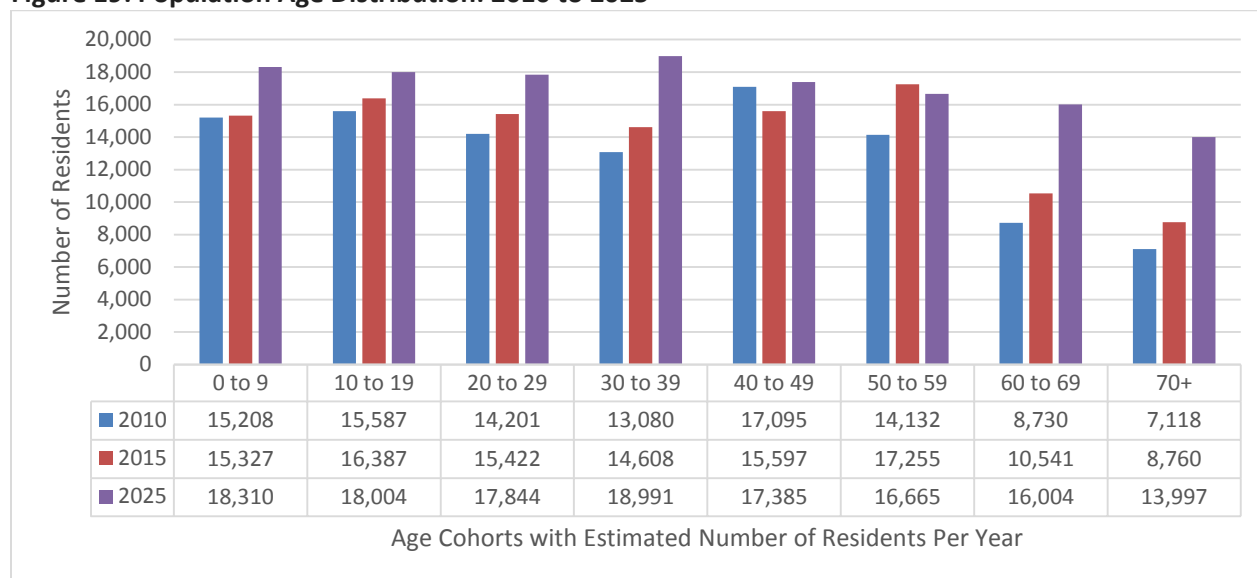
Population Age Distribution

The existing and projected population of different age groups, or cohorts, within St. Mary's County is illustrated in the following series of figures. **Figure 19** illustrates the 2010 Census recorded population, 2015 estimated population, and 2025 projected population. **Figure 20** provides an estimated breakdown of the 2015 population by age cohort, and **Figure 21** illustrates the recorded and projected age distribution of residents in ten-year measurements through 2040.

Several key age characteristics of the existing and projected County population include:

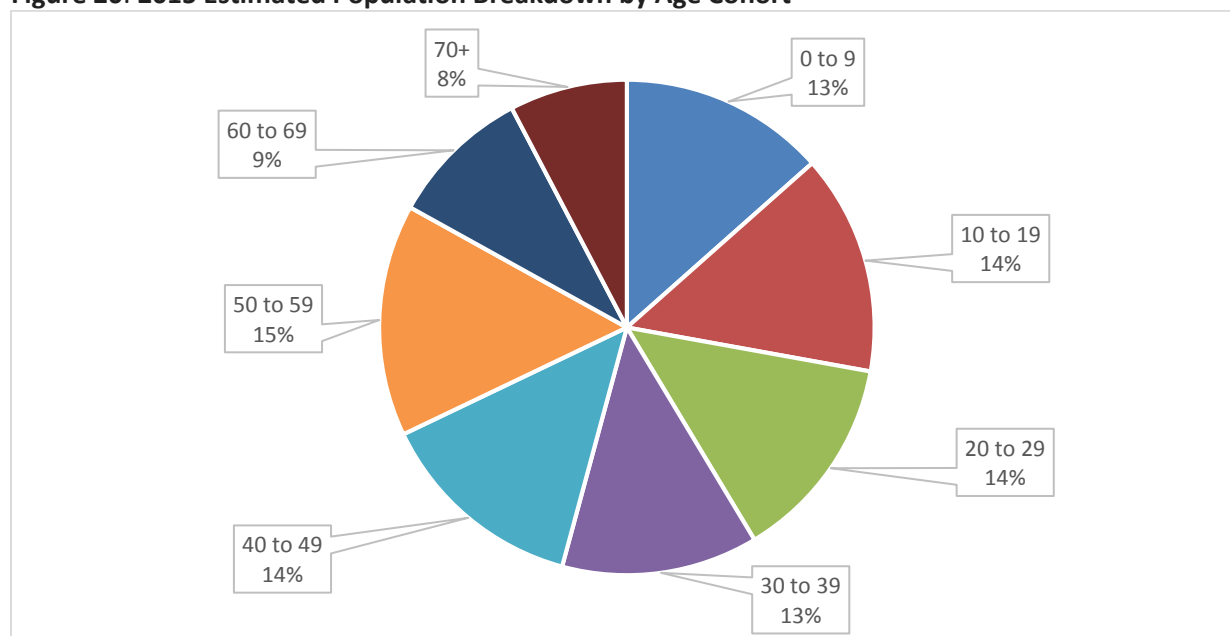
- The median age of County residents appears to be slowly increasing.
 - According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the median age rose slightly from 34.2 in 2000, to 36 in 2010, and to 36.1 in 2014.
 - The Maryland Department of Planning projects that the number of older residents in St. Mary's County is likely to nearly double between 2010 and 2025. It is anticipated that during this time, the number of residents ages 60 to 69 will increase by 83%, and number of residents ages 70 and over will increase by nearly 97%. Populations of the younger, more populous age cohorts are also anticipated to experience significant growth, but not at as high a rate as the older age groups.
- Although population growth is projected in nearly all age cohorts, the relative overall percentage of the population occupied by each cohort is anticipated to remain relatively stable.
 - The most notable changes in the age composition of the County population projected between 2010 and 2025 are in the older age cohorts. As a percentage of the total population, the number of residents ages 70+ is anticipated to increase by 2%, the 60 to 69 year old population is anticipated to increase by 3%, and the 50 to 59 year old cohort is predicted to decrease by 3%.

Figure 19: Population Age Distribution: 2010 to 2025



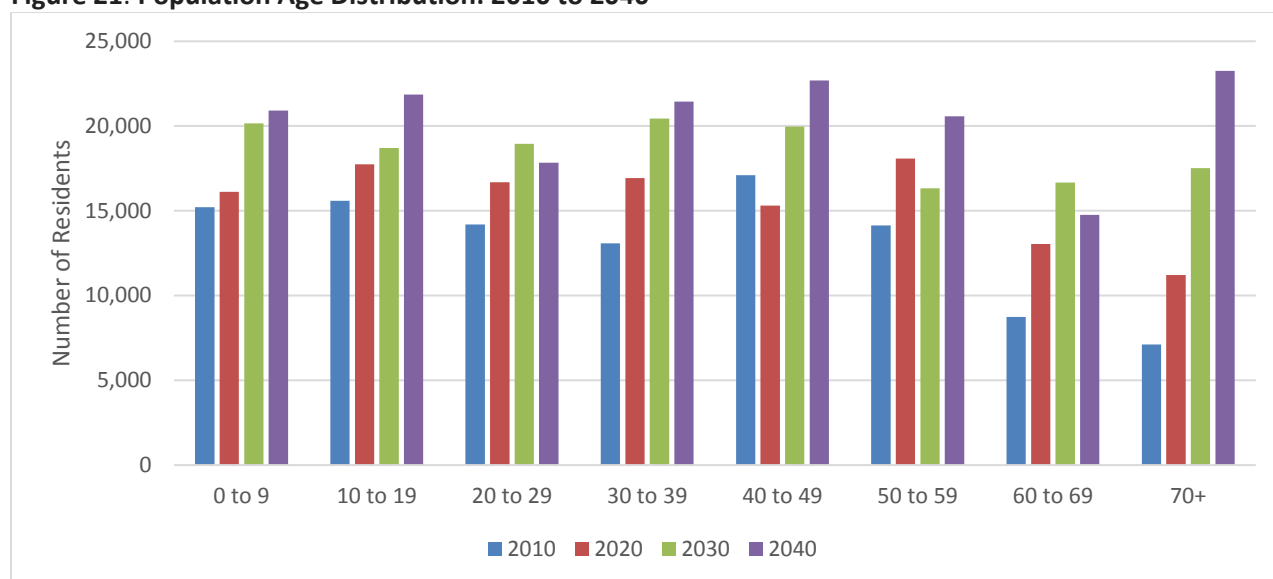
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Figure 20: 2015 Estimated Population Breakdown by Age Cohort



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Figure 21: Population Age Distribution: 2010 to 2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

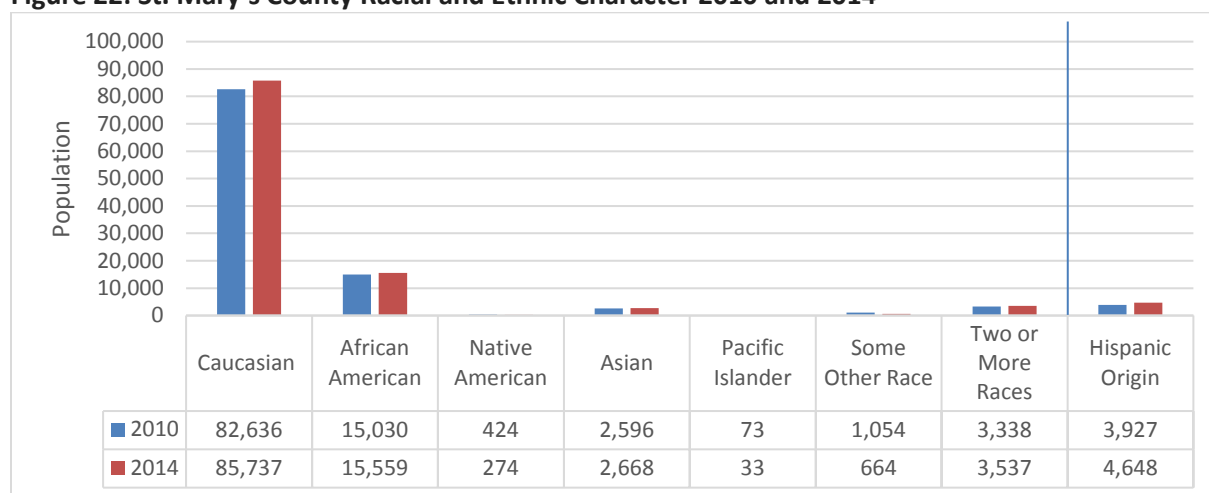
Between 2015 and 2040, it is estimated that the overall population percentage of age cohorts under the age of 50 will remain relatively stable, with the exception of residents ages 20 to 29. The most notable change anticipated is with the group of residents ages 70+. Their percent of the total population is projected to increase by 6%, from 8% in 2015 to 14% in 2040.

Race/Ethnicity

Prior to reviewing demographic data pertaining to a population's racial and ethnic character, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as of Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. All race categories add up to 100% of the population; the indication of Hispanic origin is a different view of the population and is not considered a race.

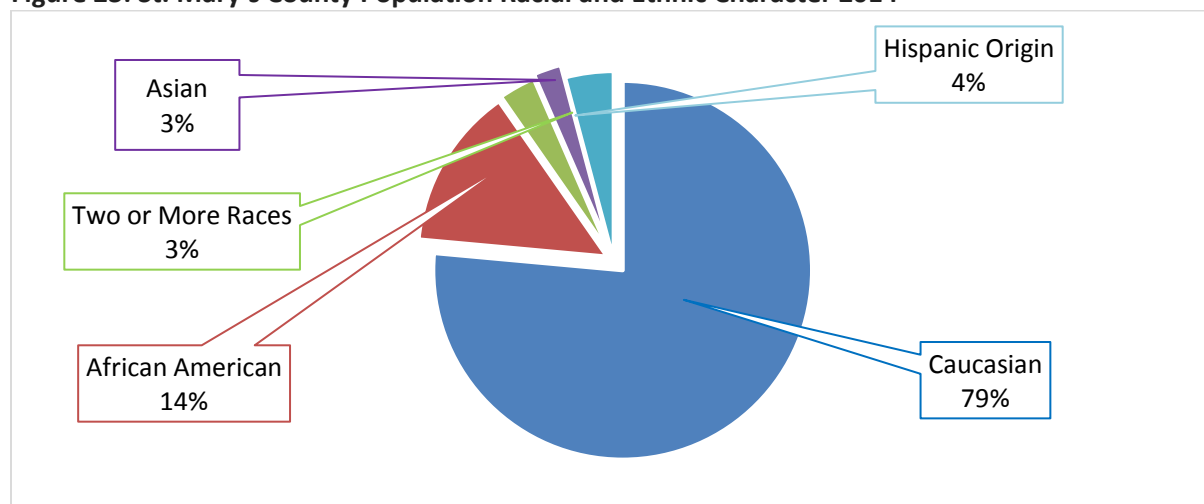
Figure 22 reflects the approximate racial/ethnic population distribution for St. Mary's County based on the 2010 U.S. Census and 2014 American Community Survey. **Figure 23** provides a breakdown of the by racial/ethnic group as a percentage of the 2014 population.

Figure 22: St. Mary's County Racial and Ethnic Character 2010 and 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Figure 23: St. Mary's County Population Racial and Ethnic Character 2014

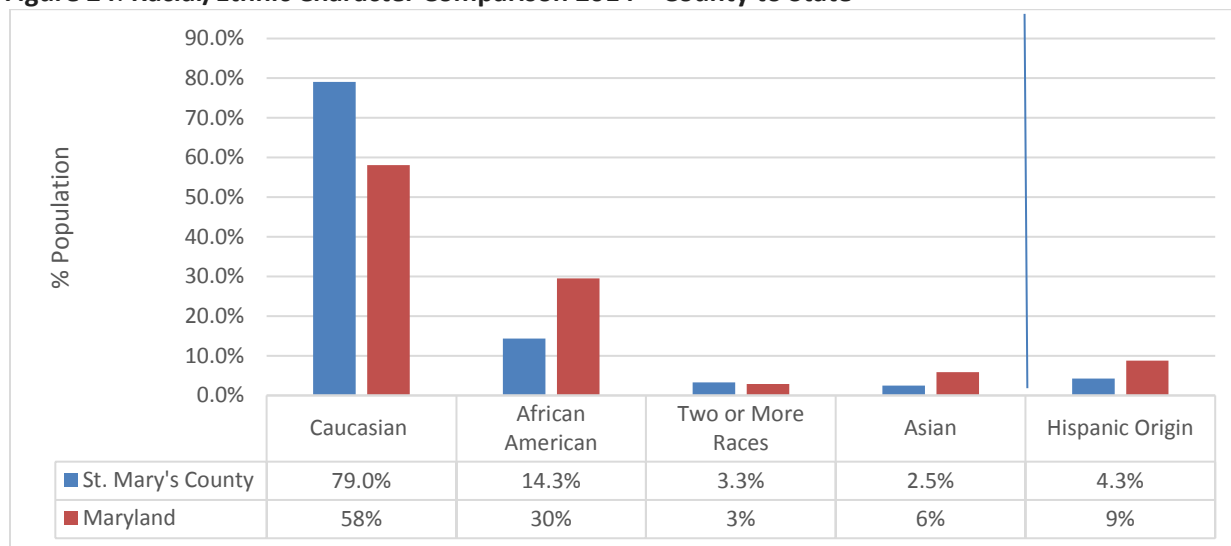


Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Although the ethnic and racial composition of the County did not drastically change between 2010 and 2014, several issues of note include:

- Caucasians were the majority group in the County by a wide margin. Nearly 80% of the population in 2014 identified as Caucasian.
- Overall, the County's population was significantly less racially/ethnically diverse than the statewide population. In 2014, the statewide population was approximately 58% Caucasian, 30% African American, 9% of Hispanic origin, and the remainder a mix of other racial and ethnic backgrounds as illustrated in **Figure 24**.

Figure 24: Racial/Ethnic Character Comparison 2014 – County to State

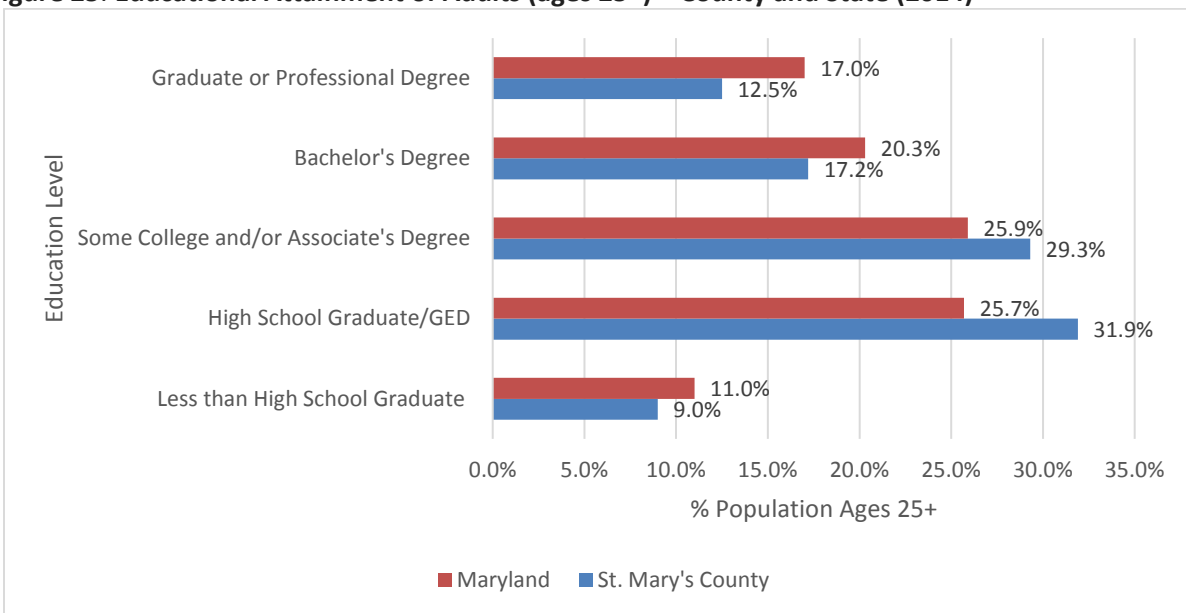


Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Educational Attainment

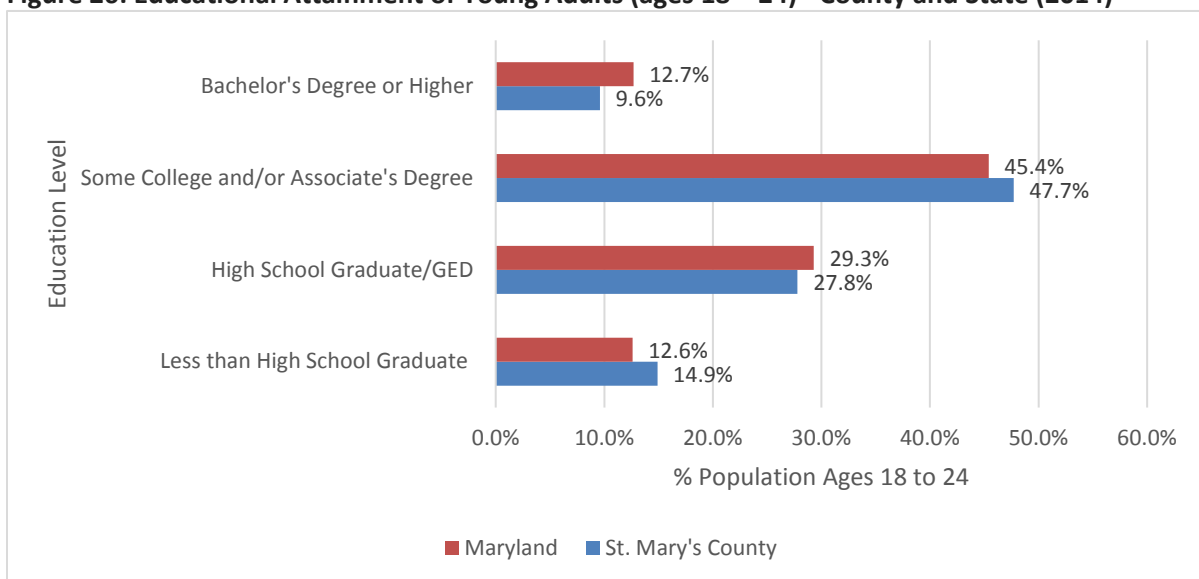
According to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey (2014) on educational attainment, young adult (ages 18 to 24) and adult (ages 25+) residents of the County had relatively high levels of education. The majority of young adults (85.1%) had a high school education or higher, as did 91% of adults. Additionally, nearly 30% of adults had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, as illustrated in **Figure 25** and **Figure 26**, when compared to their peers at the statewide level, young adult and adult residents of the County had slightly lower levels of education.

Figure 25: Educational Attainment of Adults (ages 25+) – County and State (2014)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

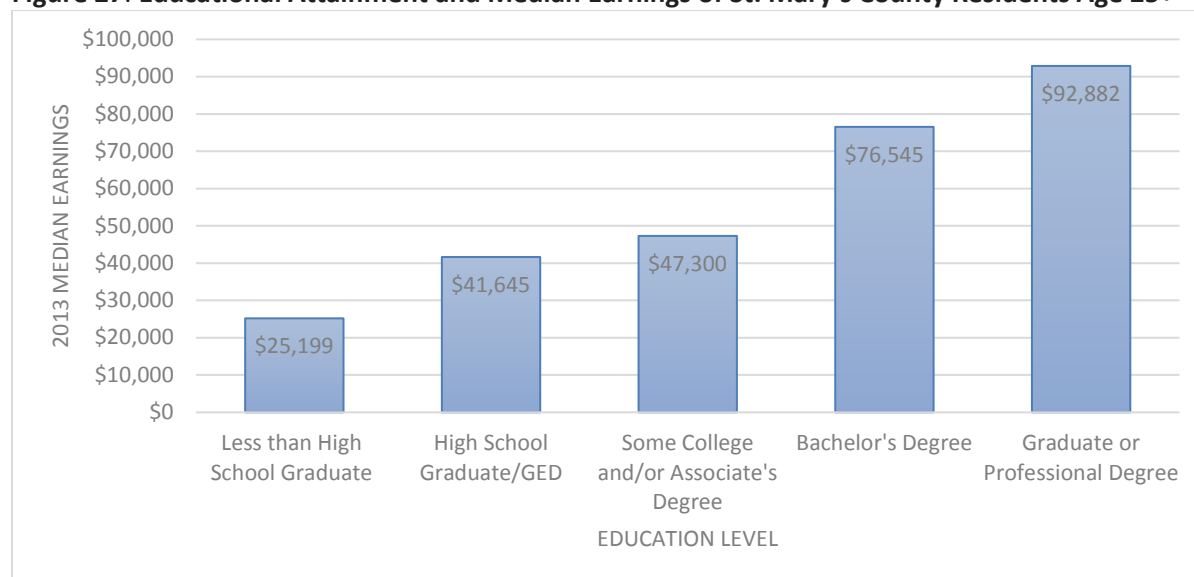
Figure 26: Educational Attainment of Young Adults (ages 18 – 24) - County and State (2014)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to a Census study, education levels had more effect on earnings over a 40-year span in the workforce than any other demographic factor, such as gender, race, and ethnic origin.⁴ This link between education and earnings appears clearly illustrated in St. Mary's County. As **Figure 27** shows, St. Mary's County residents (age 25+) with higher levels of education had higher annual incomes than those with lower levels of education. In fact, the 2013 median earnings of residents with graduate or professional degrees was 3.6 times greater than that of residents with less than a high school education. Additionally, there was a significant increase in median earnings between adults with a Bachelor's degree and those who had not completed a college level education.

Figure 27: Educational Attainment and Median Earnings of St. Mary's County Residents Age 25+



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Household Information

As reflected in **Table 11**, the total number of housing units in the County increased by 1,048 units (a 2.5% increase) between 2010 and 2014. The majority of these new housing units became owner occupied. During this time the vacancy rates for owned and rented homes fell, as did the overall number of vacant housing units.

Table 11: St. Mary's County Housing Inventory

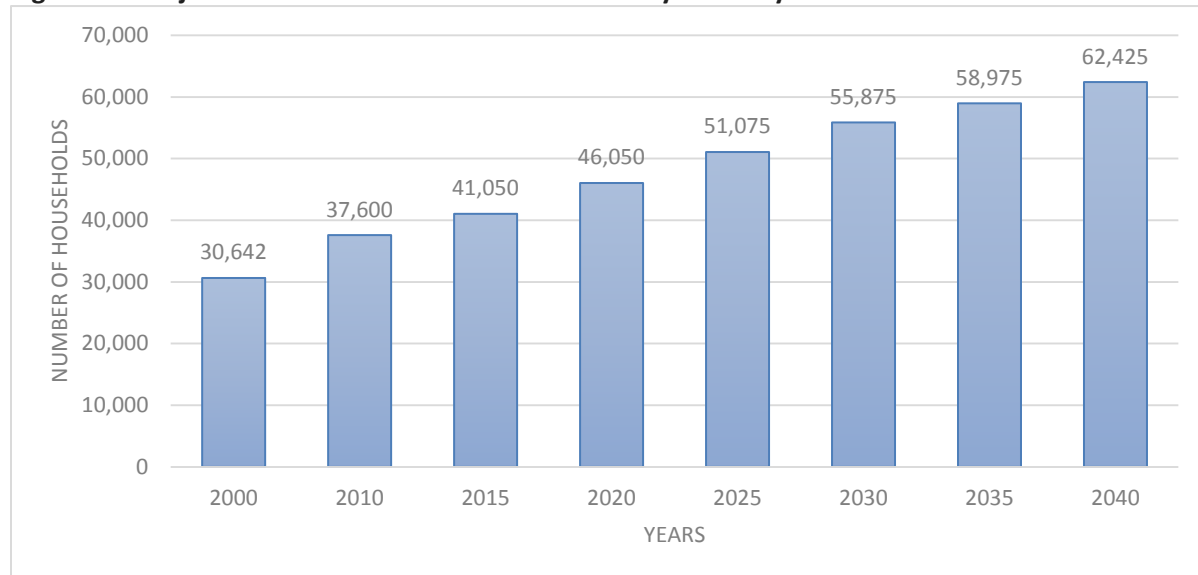
	2000	2010	2015	2020
Total Housing Units	32,777	37,502	39,095	40,894
Number of Households	31,410	34,970	36,496	38,232
Average Household Size	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Owner Occupied Housing Units	44.2%	43.6%	39.9%	39.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	51.6%	49.7%	53.4%	53.6%
Vacant Housing Units	4.2%	6.8%	6.6%	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

⁴ Tiffany Julian and Robert Kominski, "Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates" American Community Survey Reports, US Census Bureau, <http://www.Census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>, September 2011.

Coinciding with the increase of housing units being constructed, the number of households in the County has been on the rise, and the Maryland Department of Planning has predicted this trend to continue as illustrated in **Figure 28**.

Figure 28: Projected Growth of Households in St. Mary's County

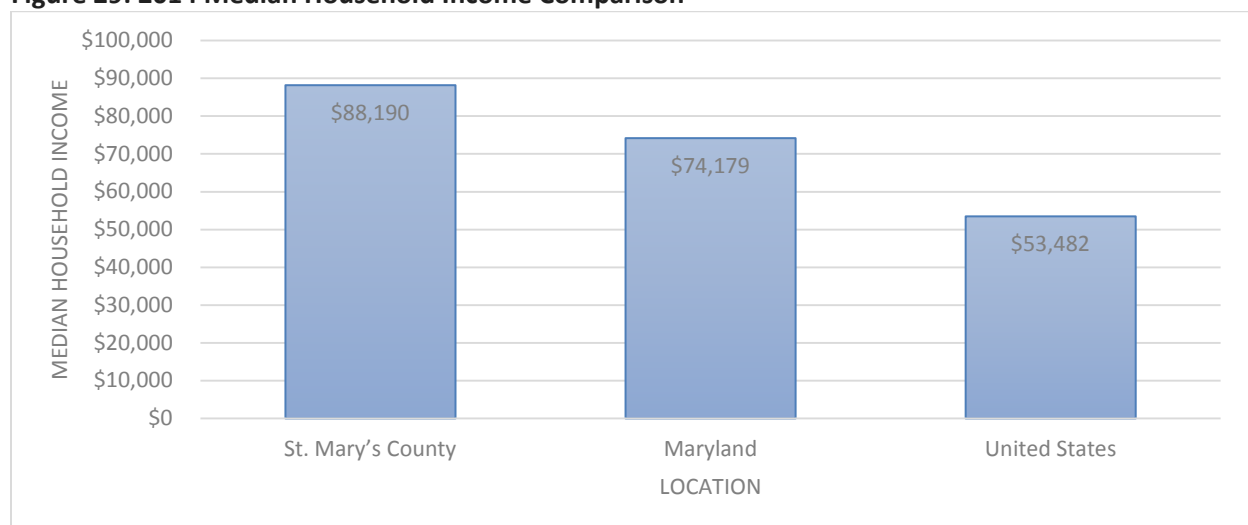


Source: Maryland Department of Planning

Household Income

The most current data (2014) from the Maryland Department of Planning and U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, illustrated in **Figure 29**, indicates that the median household income in St. Mary's County is higher than that of the average household in Maryland and the United States.

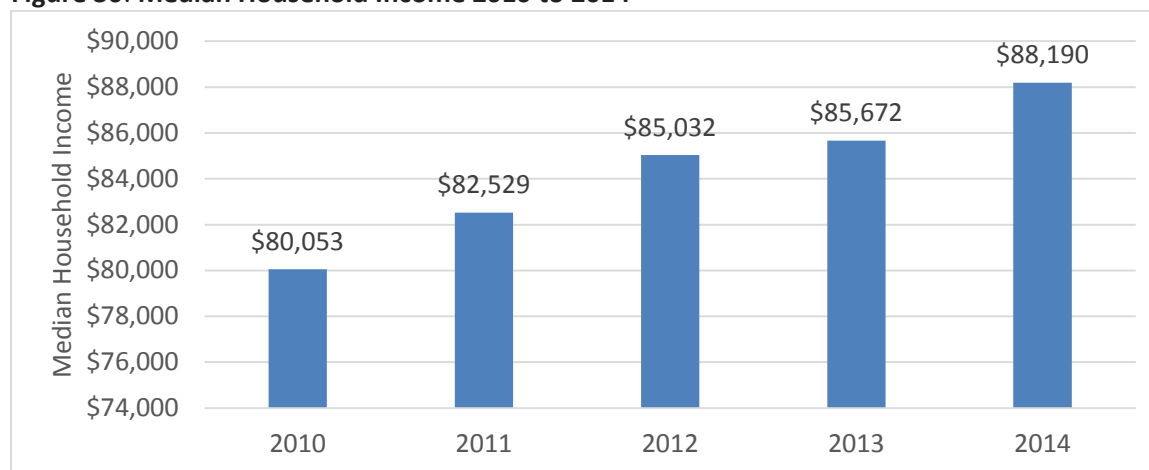
Figure 29: 2014 Median Household Income Comparison



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

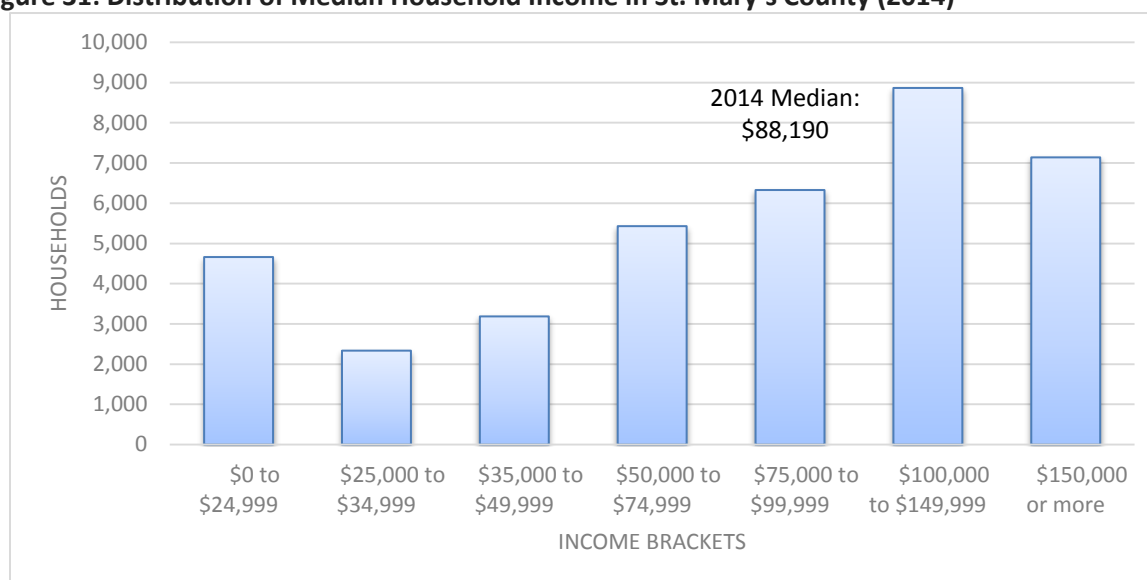
The median household income in the County averaged \$84,295 over the five-year period between 2010 and 2014. As **Figure 30** illustrates, yearly household income has generally been rising. The 2014 median household income was slightly higher than the average for this five-year period. **Figure 31** illustrates the distribution of household median earnings in St. Mary's County in 2014.

Figure 30: Median Household Income 2010 to 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 31: Distribution of Median Household Income in St. Mary's County (2014)

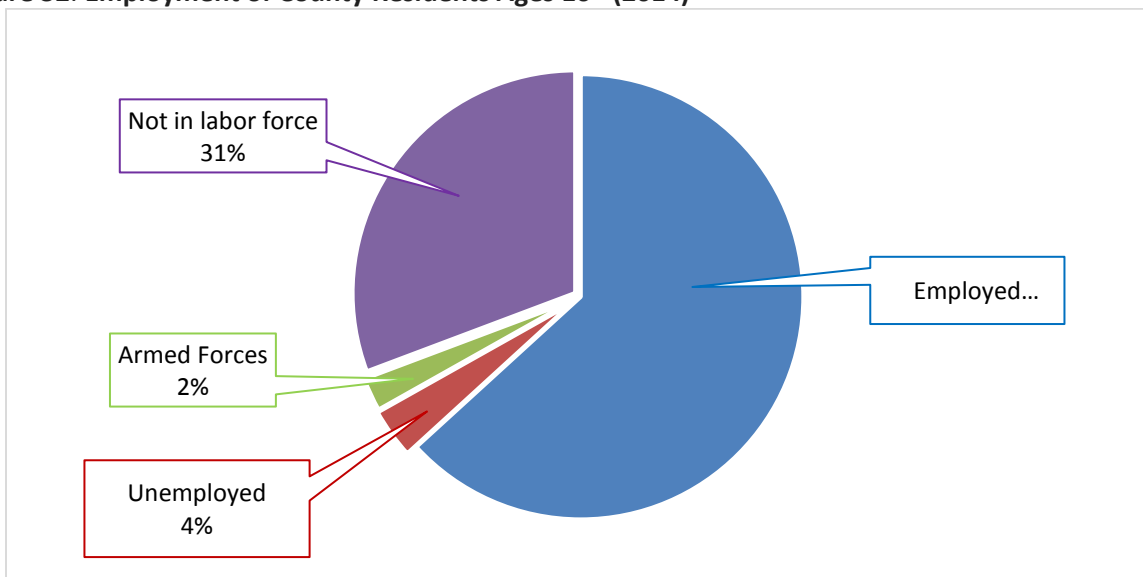


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2014) estimated the eligible working population of St. Mary's County residents (those ages 16+) to be 84,099. Of these potential workers, 58,258 were in the labor force, with most (56,222) within the civilian labor force, and an additional 2,036 were estimated to be employed in military careers. A total of 25,841 residents over the age of 16 were not in the labor force, while 53,169 were listed as employed, and 3,053 residents were listed as unemployed. **Figure 32** represents the distribution of employed individuals in the County.

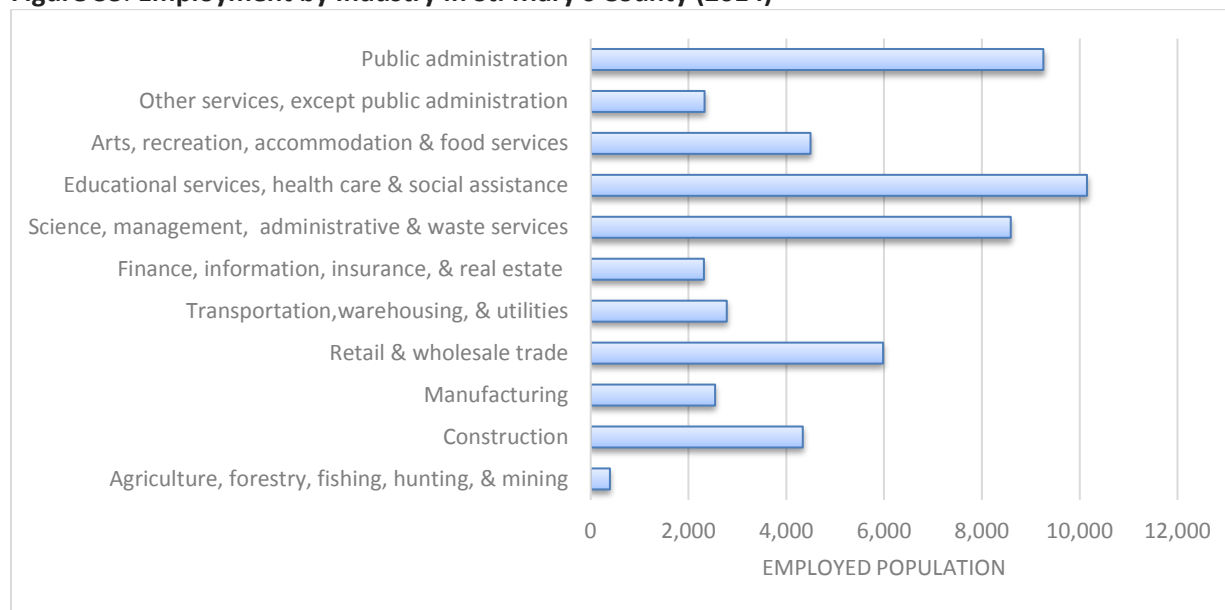
Figure 32: Employment of County Residents Ages 16+ (2014)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2014, the majority of working residents (age 16+) in St. Mary's County were employed in the educational services, health care, and social assistance industries (19%); public administration (17%); and scientific, managerial, administrative, and waste services industries (16%) as shown in **Figure 33**.

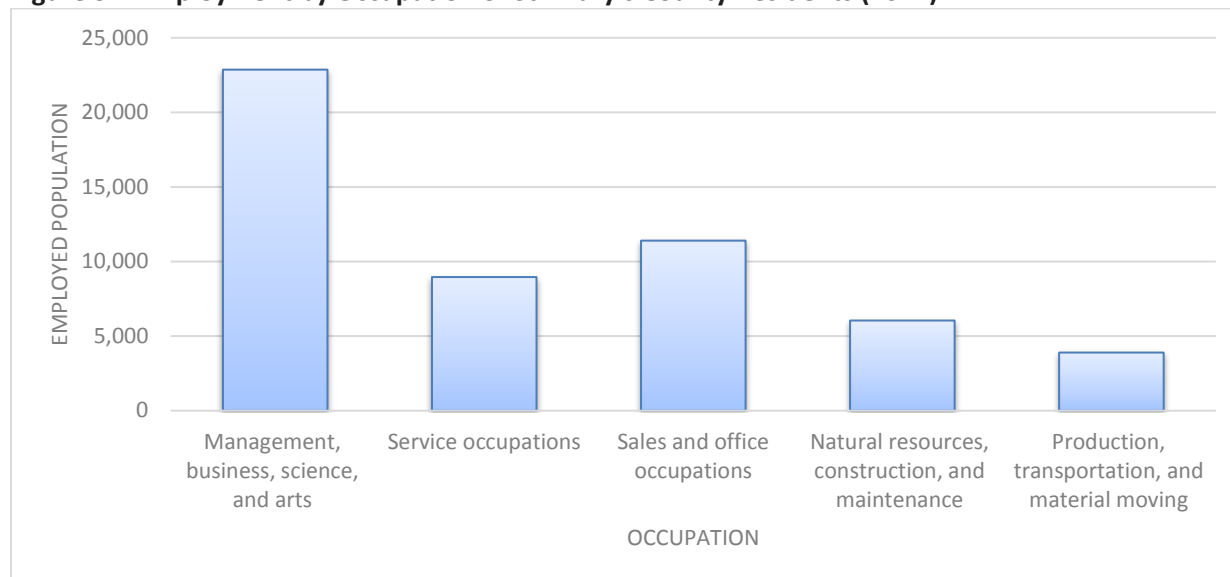
Figure 33: Employment by Industry in St. Mary's County (2014)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Employment by occupation in 2014 of working residents of the County is illustrated in **Figure 34**. At the time, the majority (43%) of working residents were in management, business, and science and arts occupations. An additional 21% were employed in sales and office occupations. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that many of the County's working residents were employed in managerial, business, scientific, or artistic occupations in the education, health care, and social services industries; public administration; or scientific, managerial, administrative, and waste services industries.

Figure 34: Employment by Occupation of St. Mary's County Residents (2014)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Health Ranking

Specific health ranking data for St. Mary's County is not readily available. However, the United Health Foundation's "America's Health Rankings" and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "County Health Rankings" provide annual data on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The health rankings generally represent how healthy the population of a defined area is perceived to be based on "how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive," coupled with ranking factors including healthy behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.⁵

In 2015, the United Health Foundation's "America's Health Rankings" ranked Maryland as the 10th healthiest state nationally. According to the Foundation, Maryland's health ranking strengths include a low prevalence of smoking, low percentage of children in poverty, and ready availability of primary care physicians. Health challenges faced by the State include a large disparity in health status by education level, high levels of air pollution, and a high violent crime rate.

The 2016 County Health Rankings for St. Mary's County were better than average when compared to Maryland's other counties and the City of Baltimore. The County ranked 10th in terms of health outcomes, a measure that weighs the length and quality of life of residents, and 10th for health factors, a measure that considers the population's health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

⁵ University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *County Health Rankings 2016*, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

Appendix C: Recreation Trends and Participation Estimates

The provision of County public parks and recreation services can be influenced by social and demographic preferences and market trends in fitness, recreation, and leisure activities. This section of the Plan reviews both local and national trends that may influence the County's provision of parks and recreation services.

Local trends reviewed are based on analysis of Esri Business Analyst models compiled in September 2016 for St. Mary's County. These models combined demographic, lifestyle, and spending estimates that provide insight into the general participation habits of County residents in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. The models also estimate the County-wide economic impact of spending by County households on various recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. Data used in the analysis was the most currently available from Esri as of September 2016.

Esri's 2016 population estimate for St. Mary's County was used as a base measure in models presented in this report. Although current population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2014), Maryland Department of Planning (2015), and Esri (2016) differ slightly, they appear in-line with one another. Although these differences exist, for the purposes of modeling current participation in various recreation, fitness, and leisure activities, as well as the associated local spending on such, they are minor and had no measurable impact on the estimates derived from the models.

Current Population Estimates:

- Esri (2016): 115,458
- Maryland Department of Planning (2015): 111,413
- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2014): 108,472

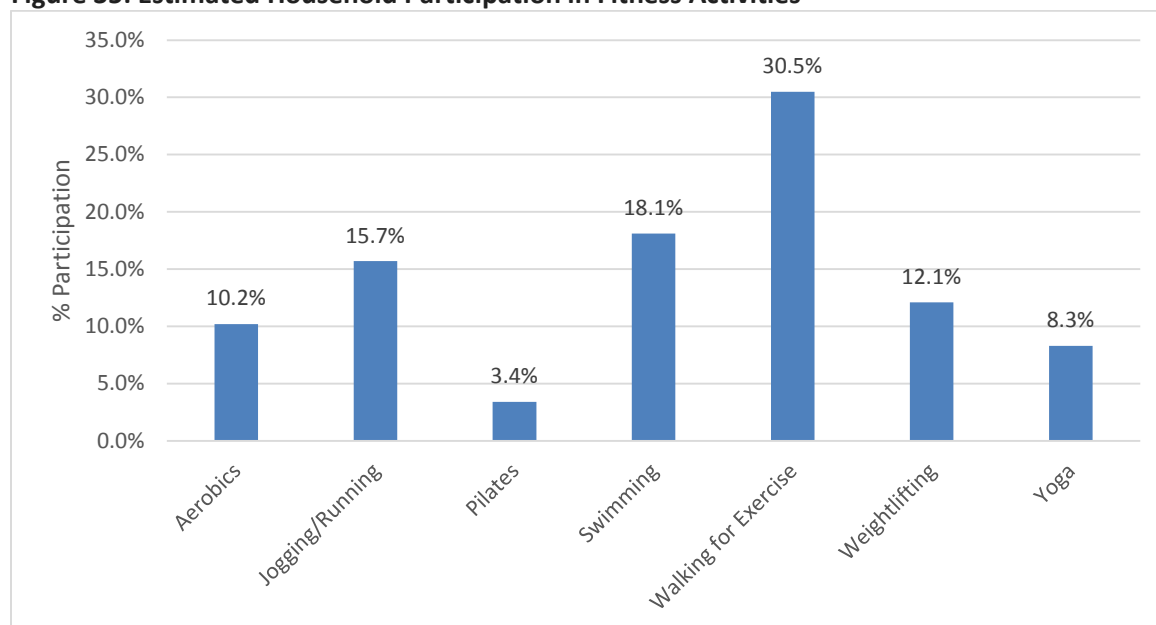
National trends reviewed draw upon information from a variety of relevant and recent industry reports, studies, and publications. Topics discussed provide insight on current trends influencing the provision of public parks and recreation services nationwide, but are applicable in the provision of these public services locally.

Local Participation in Recreation and Fitness Activities

According to Esri Business Analyst, the residents of St. Mary's County participated in a diversity of fitness activities, team and individual sports, outdoor recreation activities, and other leisure activities. Esri models measured national propensities to participate in, and spend on, recreation, fitness, and leisure activities and applied data on those tendencies to St. Mary's County's local demographic composition. The local estimated economic contribution of County household spending on parks, recreation, and leisure activities also utilized data from Consumer Expenditure Surveys prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The following series of figures highlights the estimated participation rate of County residents in a variety of outdoor recreation activities, fitness activities, individual and team sports, as well as leisure activities generally provided by public parks and recreation agencies nationally.

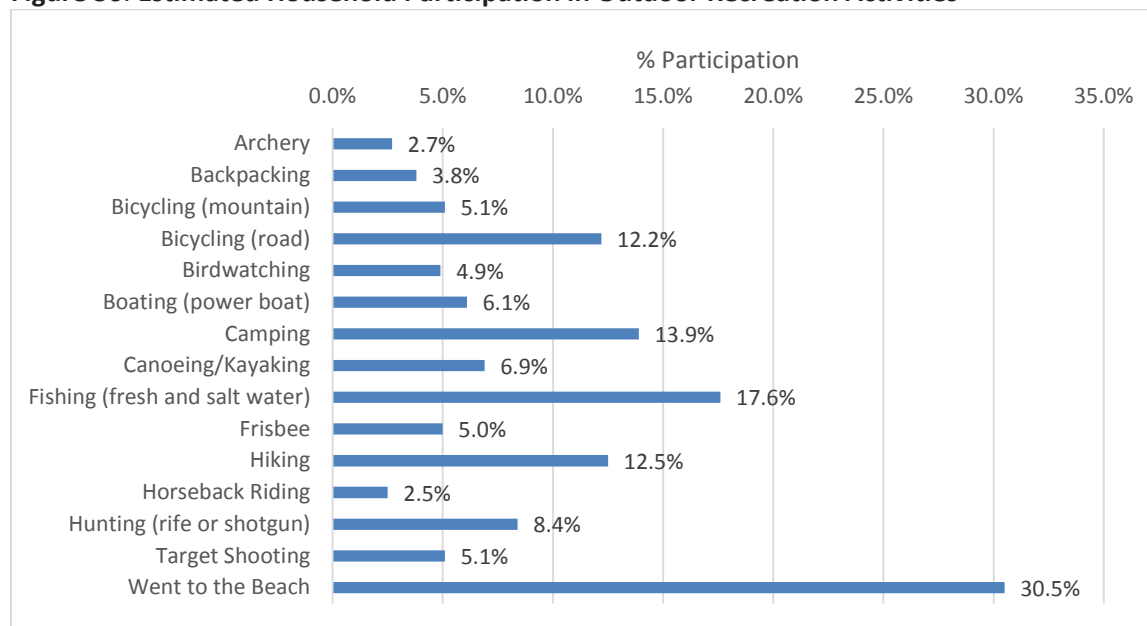
Figure 35: Estimated Household Participation in Fitness Activities



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Participation in fitness activities is generally known to positively impact individual well-being, and public health. Walking, the top fitness activity among St. Mary's County households, is also one of the most popular recreation, leisure, and fitness activities nationally, because it has few barriers to participation and has positive individual health benefits. Over 30% of County households were estimated to have walked for fitness in the past year. The provision of amenities and opportunities for people to walk, swim, run, or participate in activities that promote personal, and public health, should remain important in St. Mary's County.

Figure 36: Estimated Household Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities

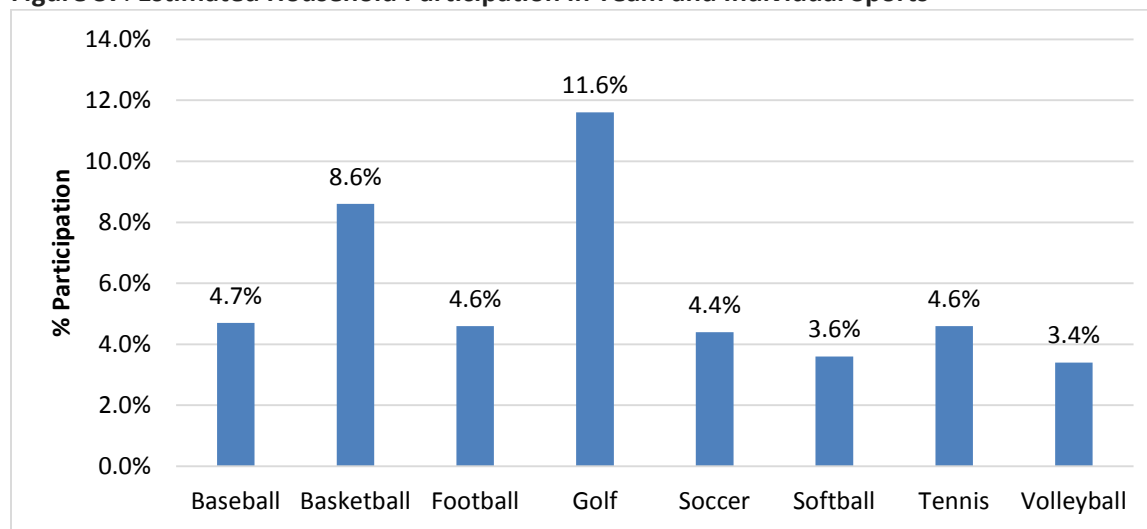


Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Participation in outdoor activities in a natural environment helps people develop a stronger appreciation of nature, can help educate future stewards of the environment, and is known to have positive effects on individual well-being. Esri estimated that in the past year members of nearly one-third (30.5%) of County households went to the beach; nearly one in five went fishing; and over one in ten households had members who participated in hiking, camping, or on-road bicycling.

Of note in **Figure 37** and **Figure 38** are the relatively high levels of estimated participation in walking, jogging/running, hiking, and cycling. Participation in these activities, which are all known to have positive health and wellness benefits, can often be increased through the provision of safe, accessible public trails and pathways. Increasing opportunities for these and other trail-based activities has been a priority of the County and several State agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation, for the past five years or more. The County's continued expansion of the popular Three Notch Trail is an example of work already well underway to enhance opportunities for the public walk, jog/run, hike, and cycle on a pathway separated from vehicular traffic, and dedicated for these uses.

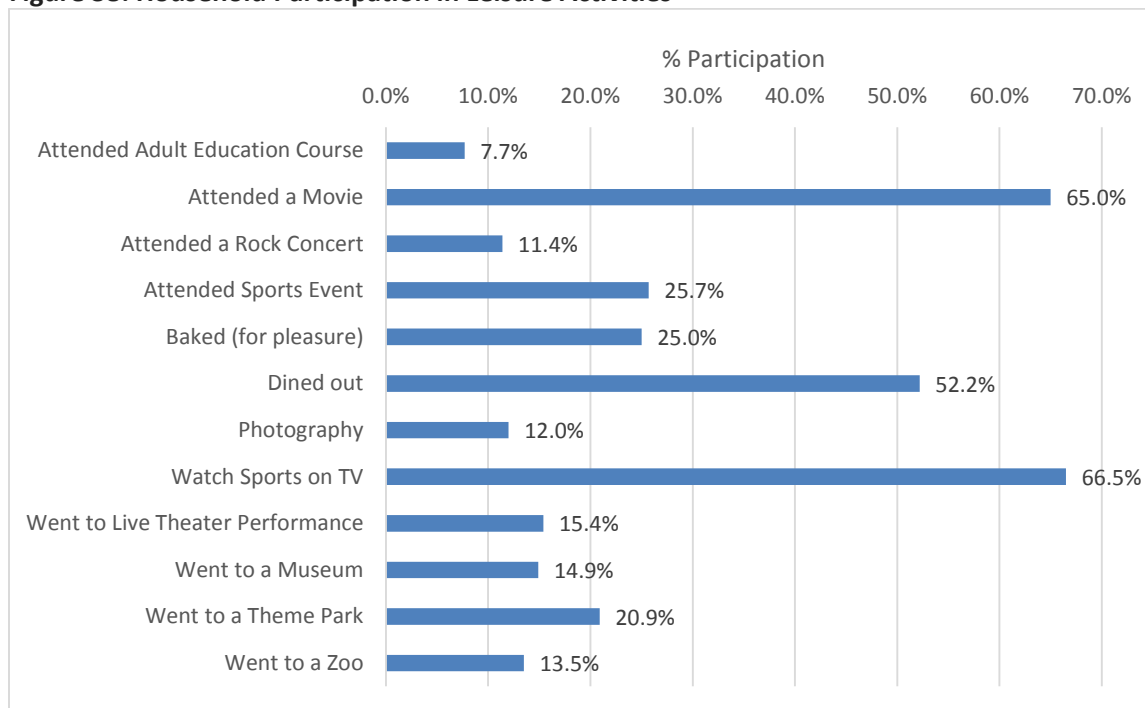
Figure 37: Estimated Household Participation in Team and Individual Sports



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Of the sports reviewed by Esri, County residents were most likely to have participated in golf or basketball over the past year. Nearly 12% of households included members who golfed, and nearly 9% included members who played basketball. Although estimated participation figures from Esri may seem relatively low for team sports, with less than 5% of households estimated to have participated in the majority of these activities, the County, and local sport leagues, have reported relatively high levels participation among youth residents. The St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks Department reports an annual enrollment of over 17,000 children and teens in youth sports programs, with over 14,000 scheduled sports games, practices, and events held annually on County athletic fields.

Figure 38: Household Participation in Leisure Activities



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

County residents were estimated to have participated in a wide range of leisure activities over the past year. Esri estimated that members from the majority of County households were likely to have gone to see a movie, watched sports on television, and/or dined out in 2015. Visiting theme parks, museums, and attending musical/cultural events were also estimated to have been popular and well attended by County residents in the past year.

Local Economic Significance of Recreation, Fitness and Leisure

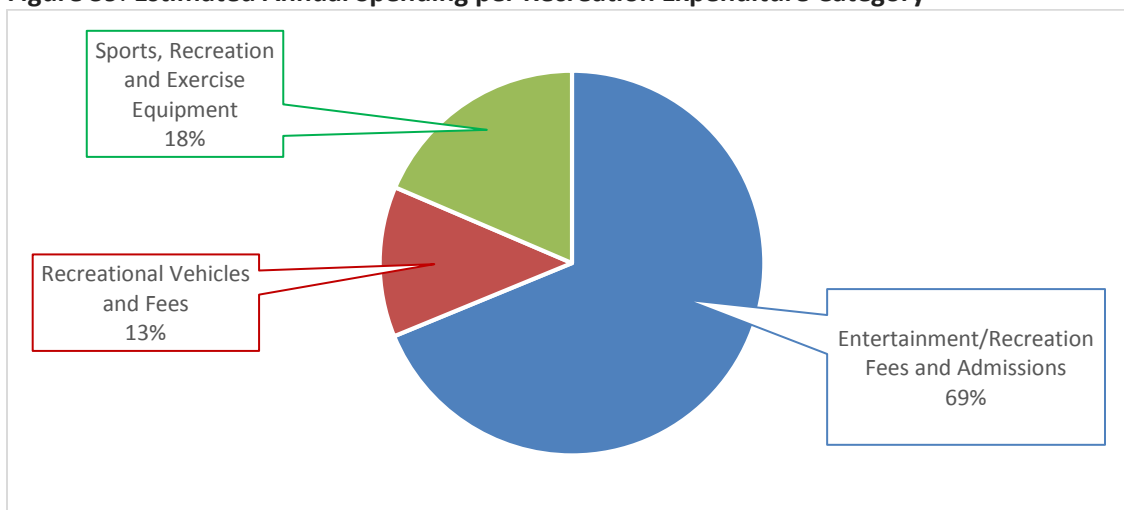
Recreation, fitness, and leisure activities were estimated to have generated a considerable amount of economic activity in St. Mary's County in 2015. In fact, Esri estimated that the average household in the County spent \$1,163 on the recreation, fitness, and leisure activities as detailed in **Table 12**. In 2015, the local economic impact of household spending on recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities was estimated to be nearly \$50 million. As illustrated in **Figure 39**, the majority of this spending was estimated to have been on attendance and participation fees for recreation and leisure activities.

Table 12: Household Spending on Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Activities (2015)

	Average Annual Spending per Household	Total Spending
Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions	\$800	\$32,816,378
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	\$72	\$2,945,718
Tickets to Movies/Museums/Parks	\$89	\$3,661,420
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	\$73	\$2,977,393
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	\$127	\$5,211,951
Fees for Recreational Lessons	\$177	\$7,268,914
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs	\$262	\$10,750,982
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	\$147	\$6,036,337
Docking and Landing Fees for Boats and Planes	\$11	\$450,790
Camp Fees	\$51	\$2,110,838
Payments on Boats/Trailers/Campers/RVs	\$63	\$2,574,829
Rental of RVs or Boats	\$22	\$899,880
Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment	\$216	\$8,853,617
Exercise Equipment and Gear, Game Tables	\$70	\$2,853,177
Bicycles	\$36	\$1,458,553
Camping Equipment	\$20	\$833,652
Hunting and Fishing Equipment	\$60	\$2,464,336
Winter Sports Equipment	\$7	\$282,728
Water Sports Equipment	\$8	\$312,196
Other Sports Equipment	\$12	\$476,375
Rental/Repair of Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	\$4	\$172,596
Totals:	\$1,163	\$47,706,332

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures

Figure 39: Estimated Annual Spending per Recreation Expenditure Category



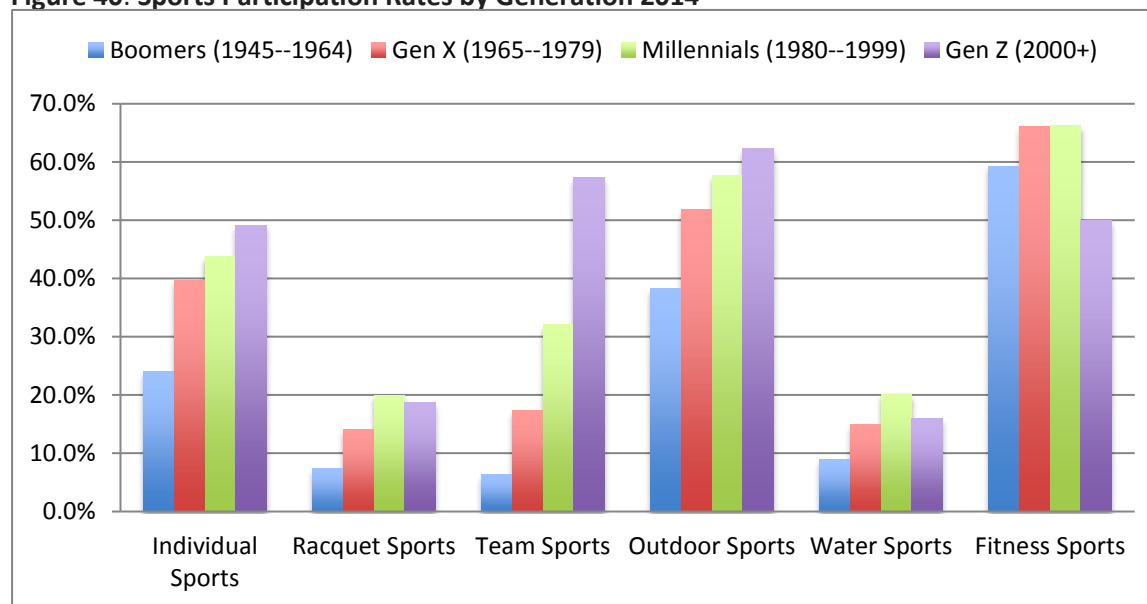
Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures

National Demographic Trends in Recreation Generational Participation and Preferences

Three major age groups, the Baby Boomers, Millennial Generation, and Generation Z, are having significant impacts in the planning and provision of parks and recreation services nationwide. Although there are some similarities in the recreational preferences of these generational groups, they each tend to have their own unique tastes as illustrated in **Figure 40**.

According to the 2015 Maryland Department of Planning population estimate- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of St. Mary's County residents were members of one of the three largest generational groups in the United States. Approximately 24% were Baby Boomers, 26% were Millennials, and 28% were members of Generation Z.

Figure 40: Sports Participation Rates by Generation 2014



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council

Adults – Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in “Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers.”⁶ They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans, and according to estimates from the Maryland Department of Planning, Boomers comprised 24% of the County’s estimated population in 2015. In 2011, this influential population began its transition out of the workforce. In the July 2012 issue of NRPA’s *Parks and Recreation* magazine, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the Maryland State University, at Chico, wrote an article titled “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today.” In it, she indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America, with Boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39% of the nation’s population.⁷ As Baby Boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults.

⁶ Linda Cochran, Anne Roshchadl, and Jodi Rudick, “Leisure Programming For Baby Boomers,” *Human Kinetics*, 2009.

⁷ Emilyn Sheffield, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

In the leisure profession, this generation's devotion to exercise and fitness is an example of its influence on society. When Boomers entered elementary school, President Kennedy initiated the President's Council on Physical Fitness, making physical education a key component of public education. As Boomers matured and moved into the workplace, they took their desire for exercise and fitness with them. Now as the oldest Boomers are nearing 70, park and recreation professionals are faced with new approaches to provide both passive and active programming for older adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.⁸

Jeffrey Ziegler, a past president of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association identified "Boomer Basics" in his article, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in their 60s?"⁹ Highlights are summarized below.

- *Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard.* They have always been fixated with all things youthful. Boomers typically respond that they feel 10 years younger than their actual age. Their nostalgic mindset keeps Boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an extension of Boomers' health and wellness program. Because Boomers in general have a high education level, they will likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.
- *Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports.* When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that Boomers associate with senior citizens. Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because Boomers relate these activities with old age.
- *Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means.* Parks and recreation agencies that do not plan for Boomers carrying on in retirement with the same hectic pace they have lived during their years in employment will be left behind. Things to consider when planning for the demographic shift:
 - Boomer characteristics
 - What drives Boomers?
 - Marketing to Boomers
 - Arts and entertainment
 - Passive and active fitness trends
 - Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
 - Travel programs

⁸Physical Activity Council, 2012 Participation Report, 2012.

⁹Jeffrey Ziegler, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?" *Parks and Recreation*, October 2002.

Adult – The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation are generally considered those born between about 1980 and 1999, and in April 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that this generation had surpassed the Baby Boomers as the nation's most populous age group.¹⁰ According to estimates from the Maryland Department of Planning, in 2015, approximately 26% of the population of St. Mary's County were members of the Millennial Generation. Understanding some of their general characteristics can help guide decision making in the provision of parks and recreation services to this significant segment of the local population.

In their book, *Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation*, authors William Strauss and Neil Howe identify the following seven characteristics of the Millennials:¹¹

1. Special: Used to receiving rewards just for participating, Millennials are raised to feel special.
2. Sheltered: Millennials lead structured lives filled with rules and regulations. Less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors, they spend most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families.
3. Team Oriented: This group has a "powerful instinct for community" and "places a high value on teamwork and belonging."
4. Technically savvy: Upbeat and with a can-do attitude, this generation is "more optimistic and tech-savvy than its elders."
5. Pressured: Millennials feel "pressured to achieve and pressured to behave." They have been "pushed to study hard and avoid personal risk."
6. Achieving: This generation is expected to do great things, and they may be the next "great" generation.
7. Conventional (and diverse): Millennials are respectful of authority and civic minded. Respectful of cultural differences because they are ethnically diverse, they also value good conduct and tend to have a "standardized appearance."

In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation,¹² Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:

- Sixty percent (60%) of Millennials say they try to work out on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent (26%) consider themselves health fanatics.
- Much of this focus on health is really due to vanity and/or the desire to impress others — 73% exercise to enhance their physical appearance.
- Millennials are also fans of relaxation and rejuvenation, as 54% regularly treat themselves to spa services.
- Despite their commitment to health, Millennials stray from their healthy diets on weekends. There is a noticeable difference between their intent to work out regularly and the amount of exercise that they actually accomplish.

Figure 41 illustrates contrasts between Millennials and Non-Millennials regarding a number of health and fitness topics.¹³

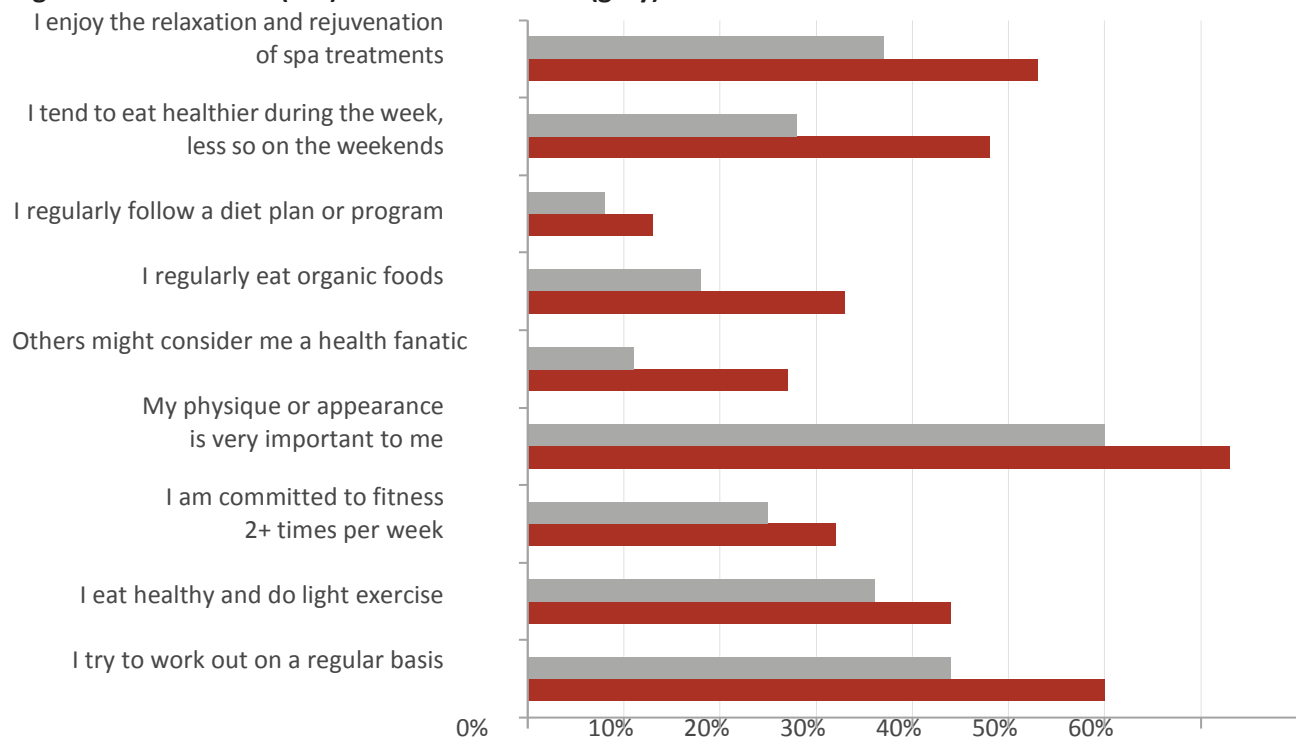
¹⁰ Richard Fry, "Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation", *Pew Research Center Fact Tank*, April 25, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>, accessed May 2015

¹¹ William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation*, Vintage: New York, New York, 2000.

¹² American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, <https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf>, accessed May 2015

¹³ American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, <https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf>, accessed May 2015

Figure 41: Millennials (red) Vs. Non-Millennials (grey) on Health and Fitness



Source: *American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation*

Millennials tend to be a more tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven age group with more flexible ideas about balancing wealth, work, and play. They generally prefer different park amenities, and recreational programs, than their counterparts in the Baby Boomer generation. Engagement with this generation should be considered in parks and recreation planning. In an April 2015 posting to the National Parks and Recreation Association’s official blog, *Open Space*, Scott Hornick, CEO of Baltimore-based Adventure Solutions, suggested the following seven things to consider to make your parks Millennial friendly:¹⁴

1. Group activities are appealing, and should be offered.
2. Providing wireless internet/Wi-Fi access is a necessity – having a constant digital connection and smartphone is status-quo, and sharing experiences in real time is something Millennials enjoy doing. Service providers are generally expected to provide free wireless internet access at their facilities.
3. Offering a variety of experiences is important – Millennials tend to participate in a broad range of activities.
4. Convenience and comfort are sought out.
5. Competition is important, and Millennials enjoy winning, recognition, and earning rewards.
6. Facilities that promote physical activity, such as trails and sports fields, and activities like adventure races are appealing.
7. Many Millennials own dogs, and seek out places they can recreate with their canine companions.

¹⁴ Scott Hornick, “7 Ways to Make Your Park More Millennial Friendly”, *Parks and Recreation Open Space Blog*, August 19, 2015, <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly>, accessed May 2016

In addition to being health conscious, Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to stay fit and experience the outdoors close to home – on trails, bike paths, and in community parks.¹⁵ They, along with the Baby Boomer generation, highly value walkability, and in a 2014 study by the American Planning Association, two-thirds of Boomers and Millennials noted that believed improving walkability in a community was directly related to strengthening the local economy. This study also noted that 46% of Millennials and Baby Boomers place a high priority on having sidewalks, hiking trails, bike paths, and fitness choices available to them in their community. In fact, these community features were viewed by study respondents to be of higher preference than a great school system, vibrant centers of entertainment and culture, and affordable and convenient transportation choices.¹⁶

Youth – Generation Z

In her 2012 *Parks and Recreation* magazine article, Emilyn Sheffield also noted that the proportion of youth now is smaller than in the past, but is still essential to our future. As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 formed about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse, and 25% is Hispanic. The Maryland Department of Planning estimated that in 2015, 28% of St. Mary's County population were members of Generation Z, making this age group the most populous in St. Mary's County.

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today, include:¹⁷

- The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the pervasive use of technology.
- Generation Z members live their lives online and they love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
- They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
- Generation Z'ers tend to be independent. They do not wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions.

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University noted that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z (which they describe as individuals born since the year 2000) is triple that of Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979). It suggests that due to increased use of technology, Generation Z spends more time indoors, is less physically active, and more obese compared to previous generations. The researchers noted that Generation Z seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a technological standpoint, but Generation Z'ers tend to fear, and often struggle with, some basic physical activities.

¹⁵ "Sneakernomics: How The 'Outdoor' Industry Became The 'Outside' Industry," *Forbes*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d>, accessed May 2016

¹⁶ American Planning Association, "Investing in Place: Two generation's view on the future of communities: millennials, Boomers, and new directions for planning and economic development", <https://www.planning.org/policy/polls/investing>, accessed May 2015

¹⁷ Alexandra Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z", *New York Times*, March 28, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html>, accessed May 2016

Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):

Nationwide participation in outdoor sports by youths and young adults ages 6-24 was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among Asian and Pacific Islanders, according to the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report.”¹⁸ The Report found that within this age range, 71% of Caucasians, 12% of Hispanics, 8% of African Americans, 7% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, and 2% of those identifying their race as “other” participated in some form of outdoor recreation in 2014. The earlier 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” included a robust study of recreational preference among ethnic populations. Information from this report, as well as the updated 2016 Report, are referenced throughout this section.

African Americans

Approximately 8% of African Americans between the ages of 6-24 participated in outdoor recreational activities in the past year nationwide.¹⁹ Youth ages 6-12 (52% participation) are the only age group in the African American demographic to participate in outdoor recreation at a rate of more than 50%. By comparison, Caucasians in four of the five age groupings participated in outdoor sports at rates of 60% or more, with only those ages 45+ (40% participation) participating at under 50%. According to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among African Americans are running/jogging and trail running (18%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (11%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (11%); birdwatching/wildlife viewing (4%); and camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (4%).

Asian Americans

Research about outdoor recreation among Asian Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino) found significant differences among the four groups concerning the degree of linguistic acculturation (preferred language spoken in various communication media).²⁰ The research suggests that communications related to recreation and natural resource management should appear in ethnic media, but the results also suggest that Asian Americans should not be viewed as homogeneous with regard to recreation-related issues. Another study²¹ found that technology use for finding outdoor recreation opportunities is highest among Asian/Pacific Islander populations. Over 60% of these populations use stationary or mobile technology in making decisions regarding outdoor recreation. According to the 2015 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” nationally, only 7% of Americans identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander, ages 6-24, participated in outdoor recreational activities in 2014.

Caucasians

According to the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” 70% of youth and young adults ages 6-24 participated in outdoor recreation in 2014. According to the 2014 Report, the most popular outdoor activities among Caucasians were running/ jogging and trail running (19%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (18%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (17%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (16%); and hiking (14%).

¹⁸ Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016*, <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2016Topline.pdf>, accessed May 2016

¹⁹ Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2014*, <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/research.participation.2014.topline.html>, accessed May 2016

²⁰ P.L. Winter, W.C. Jeong, G.C. Godbey, “Outdoor Recreation among Asian Americans: A Case Study of San Francisco Bay Area Residents,” *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 2004.

²¹ Jacqueline Woerner, “The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015,” Emarsys Blog, <http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/>, accessed February 26, 2015

Hispanics

The population of Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. In the United States, the Hispanic population increased by 43% over the last decade, compared to 5% for the non-Hispanic population, and accounted for more than half of all the population growth. According to Emilyn Sheffield, the growing racial and ethnic diversity is particularly important to recreation and leisure service providers, as family and individual recreation patterns and preferences are strongly shaped by cultural influences.²²

Participation in outdoor sports among youth and young adults (ages 6-24) who identify as Hispanic was at 10% nationwide in 2014, according to the 2014 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report."²³ Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 47 outings per year. Hispanic youth between ages 13 and 17 are the most likely age group to participate in outdoor recreation, followed closely by those in the 25-44 age range. The most popular outdoor activities among Hispanics are running and jogging (24%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (15%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater and fly) (14%); camping (car, backyard and RV) (13%); and hiking (9%).

National Trends in Participation, Facilities and Programs

General Sports and Recreation Participation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) statistical survey on sports participation in the United States 2015 edition tracked participation in 54 different sports and activities for 2014. A summary of the survey results are noted in **Figure 42**, with several highlights noted below:²⁴

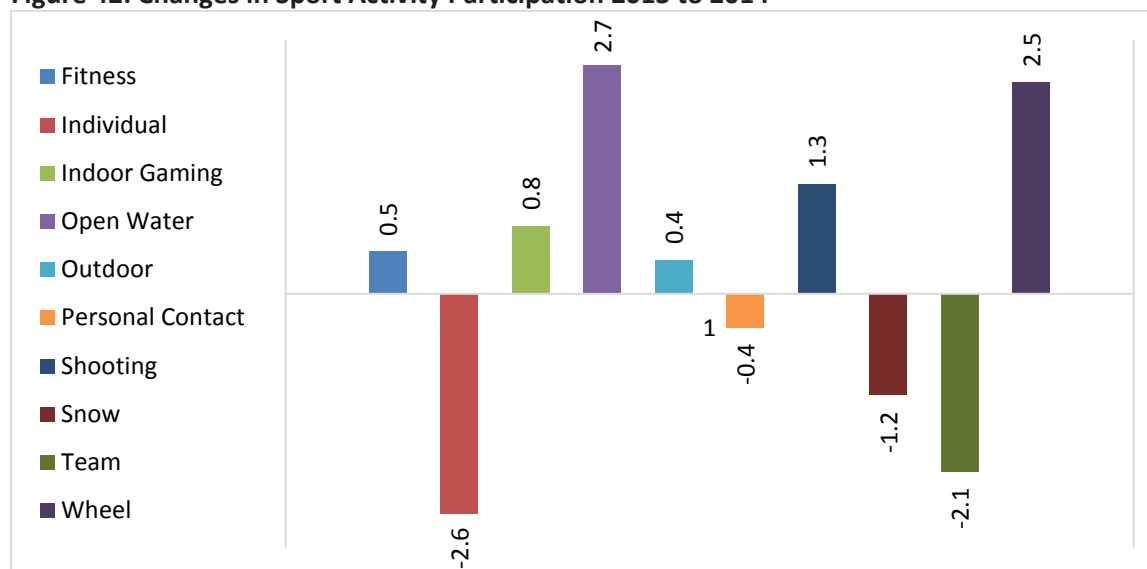
- Participation increased in 33 sports and activities in 2014 over the previous year. In 2013, roughly half that number (17) of sports and activities saw increased participation.
- Open water sports saw the highest percentage increase (2.7%) in terms of number of participants. The increase was attributed to growth in popularity of boating (motor/power boat), canoeing, and kayaking.
- Individual sports and activities experienced the highest decrease in participation, falling 2.6% in 2014 compared to the previous year. The decrease was attributed to a decline in participation in bowling, golf, and tennis.

²² Emilyn Sheffield, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

²³ Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2014

²⁴ National Sporting Goods Association, "2015 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation Report", <http://www.nsga.org>, accessed May 2016

Figure 42: Changes in Sport Activity Participation 2013 to 2014



Source: National Sporting Goods Association, *Sports participation in the United States 2015*

Longer term data from National Sporting Goods Association show that despite minor downturns in participation in some activities over past year, over the past decade participation in individual sports increased, especially in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, and yoga. **Table 13** illustrates the change in participation for selected activities between 2005 and 2014.²⁵

Table 13: 2005-2014 History of Sports Participation (in millions)

Sport	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Aerobic Exercising	33.7	34.8	33.2	42.0	44.1	44.2
Backpack/Wilderness Camping	13.3	13.0	12.3	11.6	12.2	12.0
Basketball	29.9	24.1	24.4	26.1	25.5	23.7
Bicycle Riding	43.1	37.4	38.1	39.1	35.6	35.6
Camping (Vacation/Overnight)	46.0	47.5	50.9	42.8	39.3	39.5
Canoeing	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.7	7.3
Exercise Walking	86.0	89.8	93.4	97.1	96.3	104.3
Exercising with Equipment	54.2	52.9	57.2	55.5	53.1	55.1
Hiking	29.8	28.6	34.0	39.1	39.4	41.1
Kayaking	NA	5.9	4.9	7.1	8.1	9.0
Mountain Biking (off road)	9.2	9.3	8.4	6.0	5.2	5.4
Running/Jogging	29.2	30.4	32.2	38.7	42.0	43.0
Swimming	58.0	52.3	50.2	46.0	45.5	45.9
Yoga	NA	10.7	15.7	21.6	25.9	29.2

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

²⁵ National Sporting Goods Association, "Historical Sports Participation 2015 Report", <https://www.nsga.org/research/nsga-research-offerings/sports-participation-historical-file-2015>, accessed April 2016

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) reports annually on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings were highlighted in the 2016 report:²⁶

- An estimated 28% of American were inactive, but slightly more were active to a healthy level.
- Overall participation in sports, fitness, and related physical activities fluctuated in recent years with increased team, winter, water, and fitness sports participation. Racquet and outdoor sports participation remained flat in 2015, while individual sports declined slightly.
- Participation in team sports increased the most in 2015, including at least a 4% increase in baseball, cheerleading, ice hockey, lacrosse, rugby, indoor soccer, team swimming, and flag and tackle football. Correspondingly, 43% of parents reported an increase in spending on team sports at school in 2015.

Fitness Programming

Fitness programming and popularity of various activities has significantly evolved over the past 15 years. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal* has conducted annual surveys since 2007 to gauge trends that would help inform the creation of standards for health and fitness programming. **Table 14** illustrates survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry in 2015. Some trends first identified in 2007 have remained popular year after year while other activities and associated programs were widely popular for short durations. For example, Zumba was a top 10 fitness trend/activity in 2012 but quickly declined in popularity. Two years later, in 2014, it failed to register in the top 20 fitness trends/activities. Body weight training appeared and high-intensity interval training are currently highly popular. Fitness programs for older adults have remained highly desirable activities for nearly a decade.²⁷

Table 14: Top 10 National Fitness Trends for 2015 Compared to 2007

2007	Trends for 2015
1.Children and obesity	1. Body weight training
2.Fitness programs for older adults	2. High-intensity interval training
3.Educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
4. Functional fitness	4. Strength training
5. Core training	5. Personal training
6. Strength training	6. Exercise and weight loss
7. Personal training	7. Yoga
8. Mind/body exercise	8. Fitness programs for older adults
9. Exercise and weight loss	9. Functional fitness
10. Outcome measurements	10. Group personal training

Source: American College of Sports Medicine

²⁶ Sports and Fitness Industry Association, *2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*

²⁷ Walter R. Thompson, "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012," *Health & Fitness Journal*, American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

Older Adults and Senior Programming

Many older adults and seniors are choosing to maintain active lifestyles and recognize the health benefits of regular physical activities. With the large number of adults in these age cohorts, many communities have found a need to offer more programming, activities, and facilities that support the active lifestyle this generation desire. Public parks and recreation agencies are increasingly expected to be significant providers of such services and facilities. The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.²⁸ It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it is Silver Sneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more Americans are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

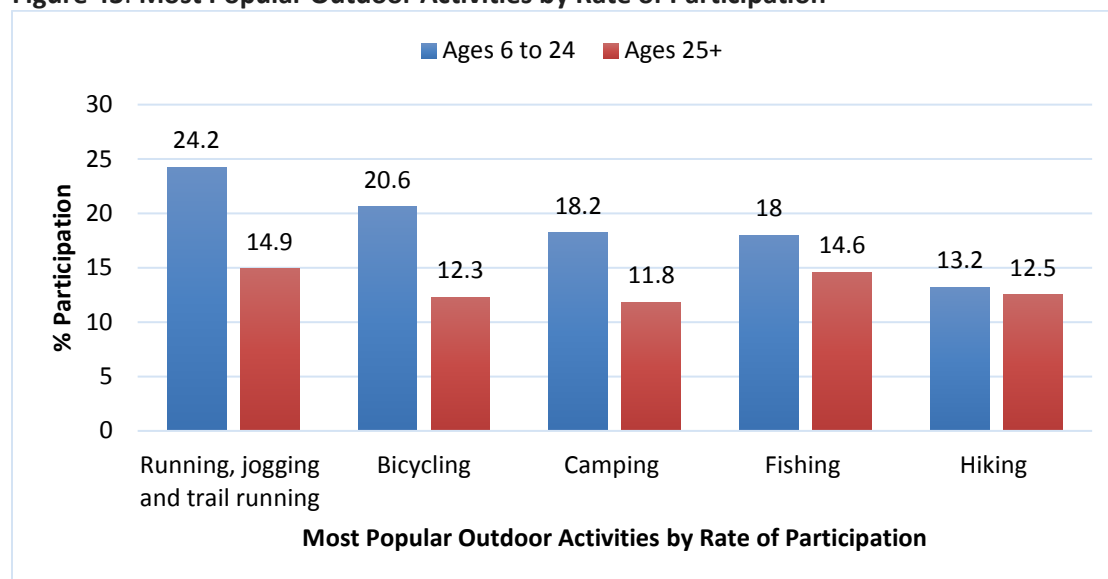
Outdoor Recreation Participation Trends

- In 2015, 48.4% of Americans ages 6 and older participated in at least one outdoor activity. This equated to 142.4 million Americans who went on a collective 11.7 billion outdoor recreation outings.
- Between 2012 and 2015, the outdoor activities that saw the greatest percentage increase in participants were stand up paddle boarding, triathlon (traditional/road), kayak fishing, triathlon (non-traditional/off-road), and trail running.
- Youth and young adult participation in outdoor recreation in 2015 was estimated to be:
 - 63% - ages 6 to 12
 - 59% - ages 13 to 17
 - 57% - ages 18 to 24
- Adult participation in outdoor recreation in 2015 was estimated to be:
 - 56% - ages 25 to 44
 - 37% - ages 45 and over

Figures 43, 44, and 45 summarize findings of the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” for the most popular (by participation rate) and favorite (by frequency of participation) outdoor activities for youth and young adults ages 6-24, and adults over the age of 25 nationwide in 2015.

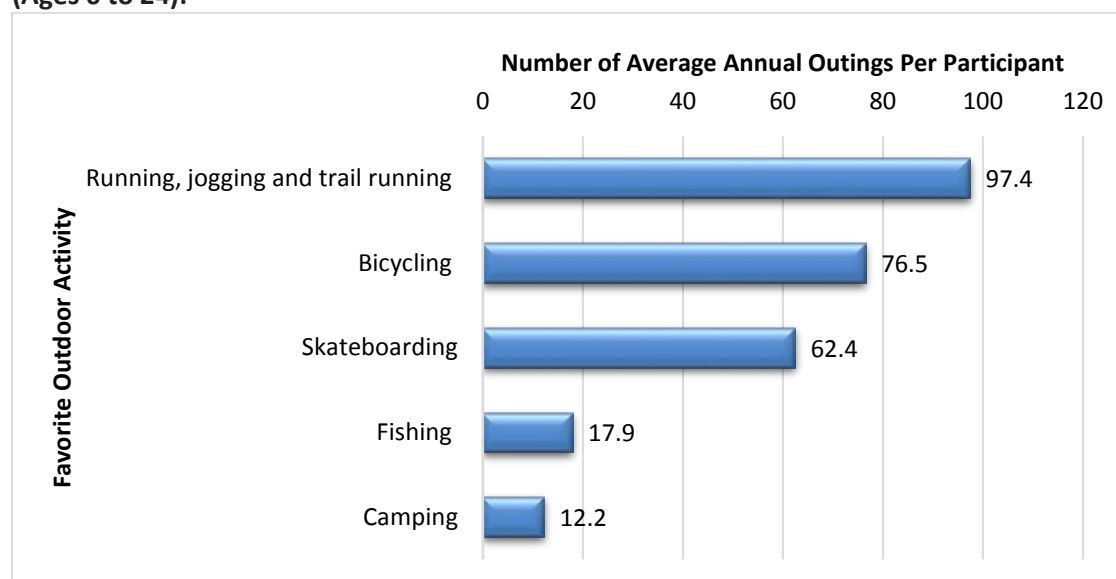
²⁸ American College of Sports Medicine, “Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015”, <http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015>, accessed January 2015.

Figure 43: Most Popular Outdoor Activities by Rate of Participation



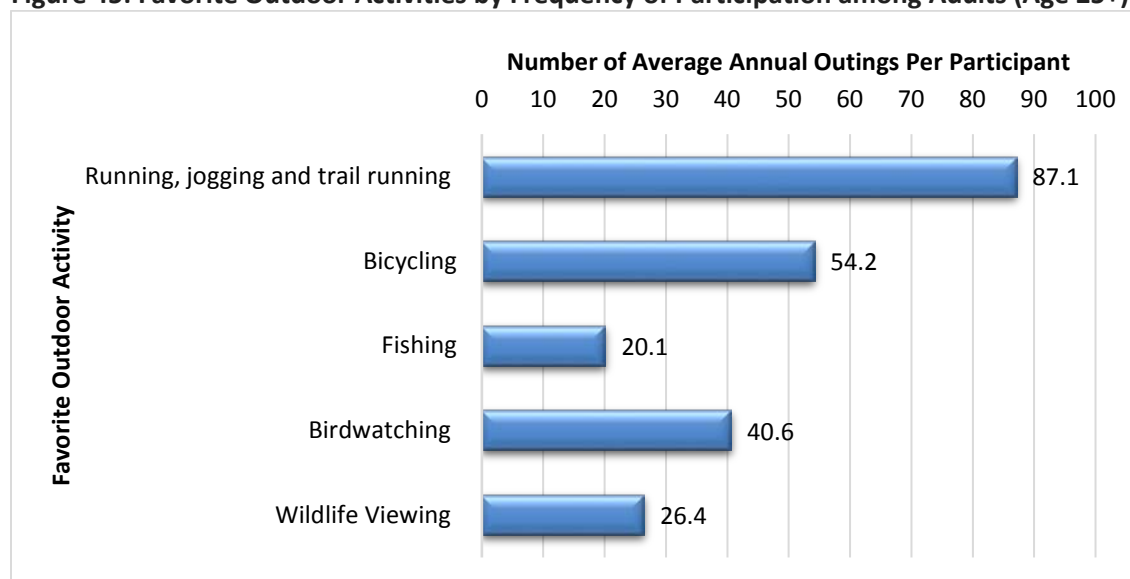
Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Figure 44: Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Youths and Young Adults (Ages 6 to 24):



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Figure 45: Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Adults (Age 25+)



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Public Recreation Facilities Trends

According to *Recreation Management* magazine's 2015 "State of the Industry Report,"²⁹ national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers indicated that the average age of their community recreation facilities is 26.4 years. To meet the growing demand for recreational facilities, a majority of the parks and recreation providers who responded to the survey (72.6%) reported that they plan to build new facilities or renovate and/or expand existing facilities over the next three years. Additionally, the 2015 "State of the Industry Report" notes that the average planned capital improvement budget for parks and recreation departments increased slightly from an average of \$3,795,000 in 2014 to an average of \$3,880,000 in 2015. The Report further indicated that the top 10 park features planned for construction in the near future were likely to include:

1. Splash play areas
2. Playgrounds
3. Dog parks
4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment
5. Hiking and walking trails
6. Bike trails
7. Park restroom structures
8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos
9. Synthetic turf sports fields
10. Wi-Fi services

²⁹ Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

An additional national trend is toward the construction of “one-stop” indoor recreation facilities to serve all age groups. These facilities are typically large, multipurpose regional centers that have been observed to help increase operational cost recovery, promote user retention, and encourage cross-use. Parks and recreation agencies across the United States are generally working toward increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse space and flexibility in facilities versus single, specialized spaces is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. “One-stop” facilities often attract young families, teens, and adults of all ages.

Parks and Recreational Programming Trends

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s 2015 “State of the Industry Report,”³⁰ the most common programs offered by parks and recreation survey respondents included holiday events and other special events (79.6%); youth sports teams (68.9%); day camps and summer camps (64.2%); educational programs (63.8%); adult sports teams (63.4%); arts and crafts (61.6%); programs for active older adults (56.2%); fitness programs (55%); sports tournaments and races (55%); and sports training such as golf or tennis instruction (53.8%).

About one-third (35.7%) of parks and recreation respondents indicated that they are planning to add programs at their facilities over the next three years. Per the 2015 “State of the Industry Report,” the 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015/2016 included:

1. Environmental education programs
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi
3. Fitness programs
4. Educational programs
5. Programs for active older adults
6. Teen programming
7. Holidays and special events
8. Day camps and summer camps
9. Adult sports teams
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking

Healthy Lifestyle Trends

Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

In many surveys and studies on participation in recreational activities, walking, running, jogging, and cycling are nearly universally rated as the most popular activities among youth and adults. Walking, jogging, and running are often the recreational activity with the highest participation level, and cycling often ranks as the second or third most popular activity. These activities are attractive, as they require little equipment or financial investment to get started, and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities are often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity, and increasing public health.

³⁰ Emily Tipping, “2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the Alliance for Biking and Walking's 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

Economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 8-12 jobs per \$1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per \$1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to \$11.80 in benefits can be gained for every \$1 invested in bicycling and walking.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

Bicycle-friendly communities have been emerging over the last 10 years. In addition to being a popular recreational activity, cycling has become a desirable, regular mode of transportation as people consider the costs and challenges of commuting by car or public transportation, their desire for better health, and concern for the environment.

The Alliance for Biking and Walking published its Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report,³¹ updating its 2012 Benchmarking Report. The Report shows that increasing bicycling and walking are goals that are clearly in the public interest. Where bicycling and walking levels are higher, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes levels are lower.

³¹ Alliance for Biking and Walking, *2014 Benchmarking Report*, <http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/download-the-2014-benchmarking-report>, accessed January 2015

The Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published an updated Standard for Transportation Oriented Design in March 2014, with accessible performance objectives and metrics, to help municipalities, developers, and local residents design land use and built environment, “to support, facilitate, and prioritize not only the use of public transport, but the most basic modes of transport, walking, and cycling.” The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at <https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/>.³²

Health and Obesity

According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*, obesity continues to be a serious issue in America, growing at an epidemic rate—almost tripling since 1990. Overall, more than one-third (35.7%) of adults and 17% of children in the United States are obese.³³ These statistics illustrate the importance of intervention and curbing of the epidemic in youth. As obesity in the United States continues to be a topic of interest for legislators and our government, there continues to be research suggesting that activity levels are stagnant among all age groups. For example, the CDC has reported that:

- Only 25% of adults and 27% of youth (grades 9-12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of American adults are sedentary.
- Children nationally spend 4.5 – 8 hours daily (30-56 hours per week) in front of a screen (television, computer, or other electronic device).

Trails and Health

Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Trails and community pathways are a significant recreational and alternative transportation infrastructure, but are most effective in increasing public health when they are part of a system. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Trails for Health Initiative³⁴ concluded that a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community. Several groups, including American Trails have created resources explaining the many benefits of trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits>.

The health benefits are equally as high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. A trail in the neighborhood, creating a “linear park,” makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.³⁵

³²Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, “TOD Standard, Version 2.1”, March 2014, <https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/>

³³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Obesity and Overweight – Facts”, <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/facts.html>, accessed on October 3, 2012.

³⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Guide to Community Preventive Services,” <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>

³⁵ National Trails Training Partnership, “Health Community: What you should know about trail building,” <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html>, accessed May 2016

Walk with a Doc

Also popping up in parks around the country are “Walk with a Doc” programs. These programs encourage people to join others in a public park to learn about an important health topic, get a health assessment, e.g. blood pressure and to take a healthy walk along a scenic trail, led by a physician, cardiologist, or pediatrician. This is a great way to make the important connection between people, parks, and physical and mental health. Cardiologist Dr. David Sabgir created this doctor-patient interactive program in 2004. With physicians “walking the talk,” the programs are getting people out in the parks, engaging in healthy physical activity, and reversing the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle “in order to improve the health and well-being of the country.”³⁶

Shade Structures – Solar Relief

Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds, and pools as, “a weapon against cancer and against childhood obesity”;³⁷ both to reduce future cancer risk and promote exercise among children. A 2005 study found that melanoma rates in people under 20 rose three percent a year between 1973 and 2001, possibly due to a thinning of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. It is recommended that children seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., but with so little shade available, kids have nowhere to go. Additionally, without adequate shade, many play areas are simply too hot to be inviting to children. On sunny days, the playground equipment is hot enough to scald the hands of would-be users.

Trees would help provide protection, as tree leaves absorb about 95 percent of ultraviolet radiation, but they take a decade or more to grow large enough to make a difference. Therefore, many communities are building shade structures instead. The non-profit Shade Foundation of America is a good resource for information about shade and shade structures, www.shadefoundation.org.

Selected Sports and Recreation Trends

Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends

The 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” indicates a positive three-year trend for trail activities and BMX biking, as shown on **Table 15**. Additionally, participation in trail running and BMX biking is up significantly over the recent three-year period. On-road bicycling and running/jogging experienced slight declines in participation from 2013 through 2015.

³⁶ “Does your Doctor Walk the Walk,” <http://flowalking.com/2012/01/does-your-doctor-walk-the-walk/>; <http://www.walkwithadoc.org/who-we-are/walk-information/>, accessed September 13, 2012.

³⁷ Liz Szabo, “Shade: A weapon against skin cancer, childhood obesity”, *USA Today*, June 30, 2011, www.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1, accessed May 2015

Table 15: Cycling and Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (Ages 6+)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
BMX Bicycling	2,369	1,547	2,175	2,168	2,350	2,690	7.5%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	7,161	6,816	7,714	8,542	8,044	8,316	2.8%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	39,320	40,349	39,232	40,888	39,725	38,280	-0.8%
Hiking (Day)	32,496	34,491	34,545	34,378	36,222	37,232	2.6%
Running/Jogging	50,713	52,187	54,188	51,127	49,408	48,496	-2.3%
Trail Running	5,136	5,610	6,003	6,792	7,531	8,139	10.7%

Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Other Cycling Trends

- Bicycle touring is becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the United States and Canada. “Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and County-scapes at a closer level.”³⁸
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes LA, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company offers visitors the opportunity to “see LA County’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnered to offer guests bicycles to explore the local area.³⁹
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is riding “fat bikes,” with tires up to 5 inches wide run that allow users to ride on surfaces not suitable for ordinary bicycles. Most fat bikes are used to ride on loose surface material such as snow, or sand, but they also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This new style of bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that would not be possible otherwise.⁴⁰

Water Recreation Facility Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nationwide among recreational activities in terms of participation in 2014.⁴¹ Nationally, there is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for inactive individuals in all age groups, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) 2016 *Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*, it is an activity that could provide significant opportunity for engaging existing interested, but inactive, populations.

³⁸ Hope Nardini, “Bike Tourism a Rising Trend,” *Ethic Traveler*, <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/>, accessed March 2014

³⁹ Michelle Baran, “New Trend: Urban Bike Tours in Los Angeles and New York,” *Budget Travel Blog*, <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/>, accessed March 2014

⁴⁰ Steven Pease, “Fat Bikes, How to Get the Most Out of Winter Cycling,” *Minnesota Cycling Examiner*, <http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling>, February 1, 2014.

⁴¹ National Sporting Goods Association, “2014 Participation – Ranked by Total,”

Aquatic amenities such as splash pads, shallow spray pools, and interactive fountains are becoming increasingly popular attractions in the summer months, and if designed for such, can be converted into ice rinks for the winter months. These features can also be designed to be ADA-compliant, and are often cheaper alternatives to build and maintain when compared with the capital and maintenance costs of community swimming pools. Designs for these water features vary widely. More information on recent trends in the architectural design for splash parks can be found in *Recreation Management* magazine articles in 2014 and 2015.⁴²

The Outdoor Industry Association’s 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” included trends in a number of water-based, outdoor recreation activities, which are noted below in **Table 16**. Among these recreation activities, stand-up paddle boarding had the largest increase in participation (25.7%) during the three-year period between 2013 and 2015. During this period, several varieties of the kayaking activities grew in popularity including kayak fishing (17.4% increase) and whitewater kayaking (10.3% increase). Fly fishing participation went up while other fishing activities went down in the same time period. Sailing participation increased somewhat, while rafting and wakeboarding participation went down.⁴³

Table 16: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
Boardsailing/windsurfing	1,151	1,593	1,324	1,562	1,766	4.7%
Canoeing	9,787	9,839	10,153	10,044	10,236	1.3%
Fishing (fly)	5,683	6,012	5,878	5,842	6,089	0.5%
Fishing (freshwater/other)	38,868	39,135	37,796	37,821	37,682	-1.2%
Kayak fishing	1,201	1,409	1,798	2,074	2,265	17.4%
Kayaking (recreational)	8,229	8,144	8,716	8,855	9,499	5.3%
Kayaking (white water)	1,546	1,878	2,146	2,351	2,518	10.3%
Rafting	3,821	3,690	3,836	3,781	3,883	1.7%
Sailing	3,725	3,958	3,915	3,924	4,099	1.2%
Stand up paddle boarding	1,242	1,542	1,993	2,751	3,020	25.7%
Surfing	2,195	2,895	2,658	2,721	2,701	-2.2%
Wakeboarding	3,389	3,348	3,316	3,125	3,226	-1.2%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Youth Sports

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings regarding youth and sports were highlighted in the 2016 report:⁴⁴ In 2015, participation among youth aged 6-16 (Generation Z) was highest for outdoor (62%), team (59%), and fitness sports (51%). Camping was a top interest for youth across the age spectrum, age 6-24.

⁴² Dawn Klingensmith “Make a splash: Spraygrounds Get (Even More) Creative”, *Recreation Management*, April 2014 (and April 2015 updates), http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201404fe01

⁴³ Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016

⁴⁴ Sports and Fitness Industry Association, 2016 *Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*, <http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/>.

In 2009, an article in *The Wall Street Journal* observed that at the close of the last decade lacrosse had become one of the country's fastest growing team sports. Participation in high-school lacrosse almost doubled in the first decade of the century. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age 7 played lacrosse in 2009.⁴⁵ A 2011 report, "U.S. Trends in Team Sports," finds that lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.⁴⁶

Adult Sport Teams In and After the Work Place

Adult sports teams of all sorts, from competitive volleyball to local flag football teams to casual kickball, are becoming more and more popular around the country, especially among Millennials (young adults from around 18 to early 30s) who grew up with a full extra-curricular schedule of team sports. While adult team sport participation is not limited to the Millennial generation by any means, a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Sports Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) found that millennials are twice as likely as Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979) to participate in team sports as adults.⁴⁷ Adult team sports are attractive as ways to be social, get exercise, or just for something to do after work. Instead of the bar scene, this provides a more comfortable form of interaction for many.⁴⁸

Sports teams in the work place are also a growing trend in the United States as companies look for new ways to keep their employees healthy and happy. The United States Tennis Association (USTA) promotes tennis in the work place, citing the following benefits:

- Developing team-building
- Creating leadership opportunities
- Increasing employee morale and overall health

A recent story on National Public Radio examined sports participation among adults in Finland.⁴⁹ Finland consistently makes the top-five list of "most physically active European countries" according to European Commission studies. There is a strong tradition of employers encouraging sports participation among their employees, which started about a century ago with the forest industry. These days, about 90 percent of employers provide some kind of support for their employee's physical activity. Finns say it is understood that healthy employees do better work.

⁴⁵ Evans and Trachtenberg, "Lacrosse Muscles its Way West," *The Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.

⁴⁶ SMGA, "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports," Fall 2011.

⁴⁷ Sarah M. Wojcik, "Millennials Fuel Rise of For-profit Recreation Leagues," *The Morning Call*, <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/mc-millennials-adult-sports-leagues-20190727-story.html>, July 27, 2015, accessed July, 2015

⁴⁸ Liz Butterfield, "Adult Sport Leagues: The New After Work Social Scene," *RVA News*, <http://rvanews.com/sports/adult-sport-leagues-the-new-after-work-social-scene/100639>, August 8, 2013, accessed July, 2015

⁴⁹ Rae Ellen Bichell, "How Finns Make Sports Part of Everyday Life," *National Public Radio Morning Addition*, July 28, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/healthshots/2015/07/28/426748088>

Pickleball

No adult recreational sport is taking off faster than pickleball.⁵⁰ In March 2016, the American Sports Builders Association reported that there are currently an estimated two million pickleball players in the United States, and anticipate that figure to increase to eight million by 2018. The Association also reports that since 2010, there has been an astounding 385% increase in the number of facilities that can accommodate pickleball play.⁵¹ As described by the USA Pickleball Association, pickleball is “a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong, that is played on a badminton-sized court with a slightly modified tennis net.”⁵² While it originated in the Pacific Northwest in the 1960s, it has grown exponentially since 2000. The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) estimates that there were about 500 pickleball players in 2000, with that number growing to 125,000 in 2013. It is especially popular with the 50+ crowd, because it is low impact but gets the heart rate pumping.⁵³ Pickleball is an attractive programming option for recreation managers because it is adaptable to a variety of existing indoor and outdoor courts and facilities.

As in other parts of the United States, pickleball is growing in popularity in St. Mary’s County. Currently, there is an approved Department of Public Works and Transportation CIP project for a new Senior Activity Center/Leonardtowntown Library replacement facility located on the Leonardtown Educational and Recreational Site (former Hayden Farm property). Although the project budget and scope does not include a multi-purpose indoor gymnasium that could be used for pickleball play, the new 48,000 square foot facility has been oriented on the site so that this could be added in the future. However, it is anticipated that outdoor pickleball courts will be part of the new facility design. Project design is underway, and construction is anticipated to begin by spring/summer of 2018.

Additionally, Recreation and Parks has recently retrofitted four tennis courts within existing county parks for pickleball play, and pickleball is also played at the Leonard Hall Recreation Center. The Department is also examining available open space in county parks for the feasibility of adding pickleball courts in the future.

⁵⁰ Chris Gelbach, “Never Stop Playing: Trends in Adult Recreational Sports” *Recreation Management*, September 2013, http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201309fe02, accessed January 2015

⁵¹ American Sports Builders Association, “Pickleball by the Numbers: Growing Across the US,” <https://sportsbuilders.wordpress.com/2016/03/28/pickleball-by-the-numbers-growing-across-the-u-s/>

⁵² USAPA, “What is Pickleball?”, <http://www.usapa.org/what-is-pickleball/>, accessed September 2016

⁵³ David Crumpler, “Pickleball a fast-growing sport, especially for the 50 and older crowd,” *Florida Times Union*, January 26, 2015, <http://jacksonville.com/prime-time/2015-01-26/story/pickleball-fast-growing-sport-especially-50-and-older-crowd>, accessed January 2015

Therapeutic Recreation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) established that persons with disabilities have the right to the same access to parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities. In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, “Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities.”⁵⁴ This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing.
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation.
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility.
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities.
5. Ensure access to key health and support services.
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities.

Therapeutic Services bring two forms of services for persons with disabilities into play, specific programming, and inclusion services. Individuals with disabilities need not only functional skills but to have physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to them and accommodating individual needs. Inclusion allows individuals to determine their own interests and follow them.

Many park and recreation departments around the country are offering specific programming for people with disabilities, but not as many offer inclusion services. In “Play for All—Therapeutic Recreation Embraces All Abilities,” an article in *Recreation Management* magazine,⁵⁵ Dana Carman described resources for communities looking to expand their therapeutic recreation services.

Therapeutic recreation includes a renewed focus on serving people with the social/emotional challenges associated with “invisible disabilities” such as ADHD, bipolar disorders, spectrum disorders and sensory integration disorders. A growing number of park and recreation departments are making services for those with invisible disabilities a successful part of their programming as well. When well done, these same strategies improve the recreation experience for everyone.⁵⁶

Role and Responsibility of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International County/County Management Association.⁵⁷

- Parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within the community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

⁵⁴ National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004>.

⁵⁵ Dana Carman, “Play for All,” *Recreation Management*, February 2007, <http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php>, accessed May 2016

⁵⁶ Kelli Anderson, “A Welcome Inclusion,” *Recreation Management*, October 2010, <http://recmanagement.com/201010fe03.php>, accessed February 2015

⁵⁷ International County Management Association, www.ICMA.org, accessed June 2012.

In summary, the United States, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to insure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

Administrative Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out, and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Funding

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s 2015 “State of the Industry Report,” survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2012 through 2014 indicated a continued recovery from the impact of the recession of 2008. From 2013 to 2014, 44.1% of respondents reported that their revenues had either had increased and another 44.1% reported revenues staying steady. About 48.7% of respondents said they expected revenues to continue to increase in 2015, while 44% expected no change.

Trends in Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers

Active Network offers expertise in activity and participation management. Its mission is to make the world a more active place. Its blog offered the following marketing mix ideas, which came out of a meeting with park and recreational professionals in the Chicago area.⁵⁸

- Updated booths and community event presence – Utilization of a tablet or laptop to show programs you offer and provide event participants the opportunity to register on the spot.
- Facebook redirect app – This application redirects people automatically to the link you provide. Add it to your Facebook page.
- Instagram challenge – Think about how you can use mobile and social tools at your next event. It could be an Instagram contest during an event set up as a scavenger hunt with participants taking pictures of clues and posting them on Instagram.

⁵⁸ Active Network, <http://www.activenetwork.com>, accessed May 2014

- Social media coupons – Research indicates that the top reason people follow an organization on a social network is to receive discounts or coupons. Consider posting an event discount on your social networks redeemable by accessing on phone or printing out.

Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social media marketing tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.⁵⁹

Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans own a cell phone, and most use the devices for much more than phone calls. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults ages 30 and older. Usage rates trends indicate that Millennials tend to get information most frequently using mobile devices such as smartphones. For example, 97% of cell phone owners ages 18–29 send and receive text messages, compared to 94% of ages 30–49, 75% of ages 50–64, and 35% of those 65 and older. In 2016, the vast majority of the population in the United States has access to a smartphone, computer, or other device, and is nearly always “connected.”

⁵⁹ Jacqueline Woerner, “The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015,” Emarsys Blog, <http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/>, accessed February 26, 2015.

Appendix D: 2016 Open Link Survey Summary Results



Survey Summary Report

St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan
October 2016

As part of the planning process to update the St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for 2017, the County's Department of Recreation and Parks administered an online survey as a means of collecting additional public feedback. The survey, consisting of 17 questions, was hosted on the Department's website for a period of two weeks in September 2016, and was responded to 1,436 times. Responses to the survey were used to in the formulation of goals and recommendations for targeting the enhancement of the County's parks and recreation system. Not all respondents answered all questions.

Summary of results by question:

- 1. Do you reside in St. Mary's County? If not a St. Mary's County resident, but a user of our parks and recreation system, where do you reside?*

Yes: 96%, No: 4% Total responses: 1,436

Most respondents who noted they were not residents, and responded to the second part of the question, indicated they were from Calvert County.

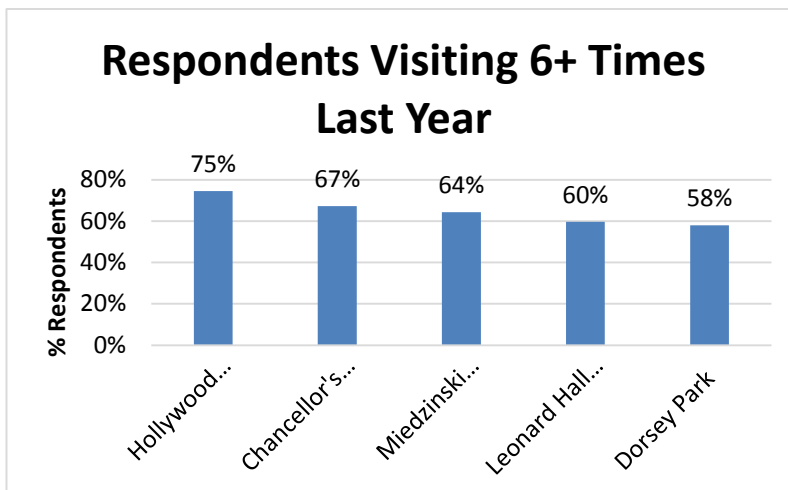
- 2. Did you or any other members of your household visit a St. Mary's County owned/operated park, recreation facility, museum, or waterfront public landing in the past twelve months?*

Yes: 98%, No: 2% Total responses: 1,385

- 3. If yes, which park(s), facilities, museums, or public landings did you visit, and approximately how many times did you visit?*

Total responses: 1,386

A total of 49 facilities were offered as choices. Options for indicating frequency of visitation consisted of one time, 2-5 times, 6-10 times, or more than 10 times. Based on a weighted average of responses to both portions of the question, the top five most heavily visited facilities were Hollywood Soccer Complex, Chancellor's Run Park, Miedzinski Park and Weicks Playground, Leonard Hall Recreation Center, and Dorsey Park. Respondents also reported visiting these facilities relatively frequently, with the majority indicating visiting six or more times in the past year.



- 4.** *Of the parks, recreation facilities, museums or public landings that you or your household members have visited, please rate their condition.*

Total responses: 1,233

Respondents were asked to rate their perception of facility quality as poor, fair, good or excellent. Based on a weighted average of responses, the five facilities perceived as being of the highest quality were the Three Notch Trail, Chancellor's Run Park, St. Clement's Island Museum, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park, and Cecil Park.

Facilities perceived to be in the Best Overall Condition by Respondents:

1. Three Notch Trail
2. Chancellor's Run Park
3. St. Clement's Island Museum
4. Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park
5. Cecil Park

- 5.** *What could be done to encourage you or members of your household to use parks, museums, golf course, and recreation facilities in St. Mary's County more often?*

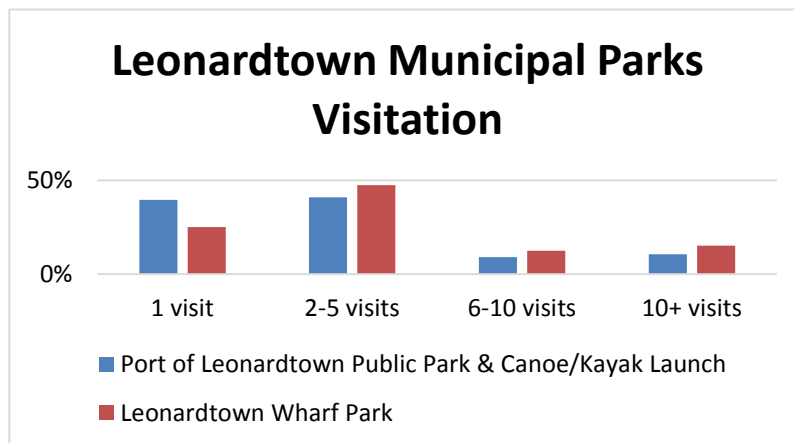
Total responses: 686

Each response consisted of comments provided by survey respondents. Feedback provided ranged broadly, but common themes in the suggestions included adding new/expanding existing amenities such as athletic fields, courts for tennis and pickleball, restroom facilities, and lighting, renovation of recreation centers, expanding indoor recreation opportunities, improving maintenance of existing facilities, improving the surface quality of athletic fields, and completing the Three Notch Trail.

6. Have you or members of your household visited a Town of Leonardtown managed park or public landing in the past twelve months?

Total responses: 772

Response options were limited to two facility options, the Port of Leonardtown Public Park and Canoe/Kayak Launch, or the Leonardtown Wharf Park, and visitation frequency options of one time, 2-5 time, 6-10 times, and more than 10 times.



7. Did you or any other members of your household visit a State park located in St. Mary's County in the past year?

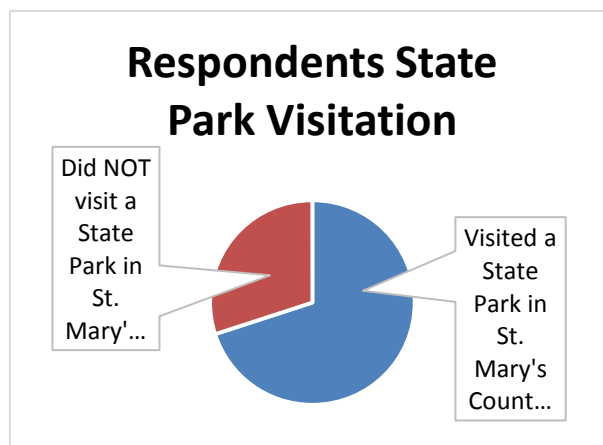
Yes: 70%, No: 30%

Total responses: 1,231

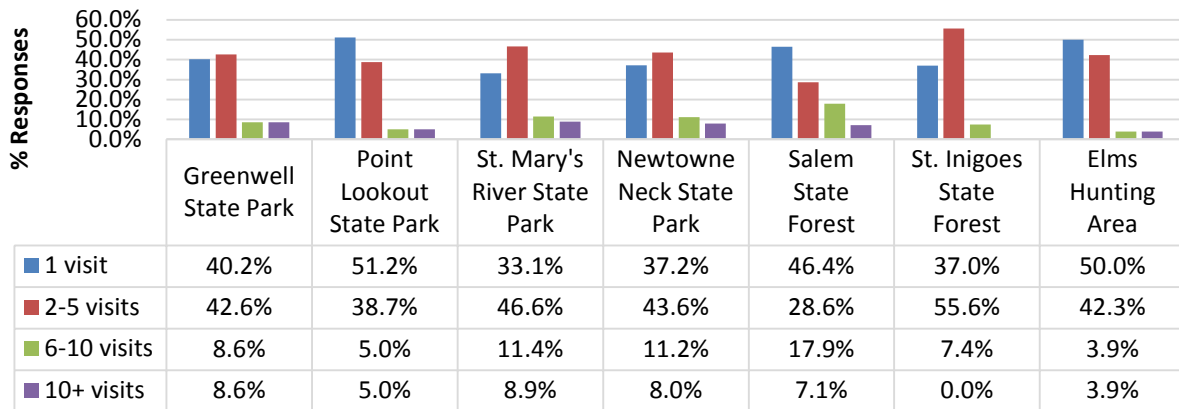
8. If yes, which park(s) did you visit and approximately how many times did you visit?

Total responses: 884

Seven facilities managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources were listed as response options. Visitation frequency options for responses consisted of one time, 2-5 times, 6-10 times, and more than 10 times.



Respondents Frequency of Visitation to State Parks and Forests in St. Mary's County



Based on a weighted average of responses, Greenwell State Park, Point Lookout State Park, and St. Mary's River State Park are the most visited state parks in the County by respondents. Unlike visitation to County parks and recreation areas, survey respondents reported visiting State parks with less frequency. Approximately 80% of respondents who reported visiting the parks noted above, indicated visiting between one and five times over the past year.

9. On a scale from 1 to 4, where 4 is very important and 1 is not at all important, please indicate how you rate the importance of each of the following parks, recreation, and open space statements in terms of how they impact your quality of life as a County resident.

Total responses: 1,221

The six statements offered are listed below in order of importance, based on a weighted average of responses:

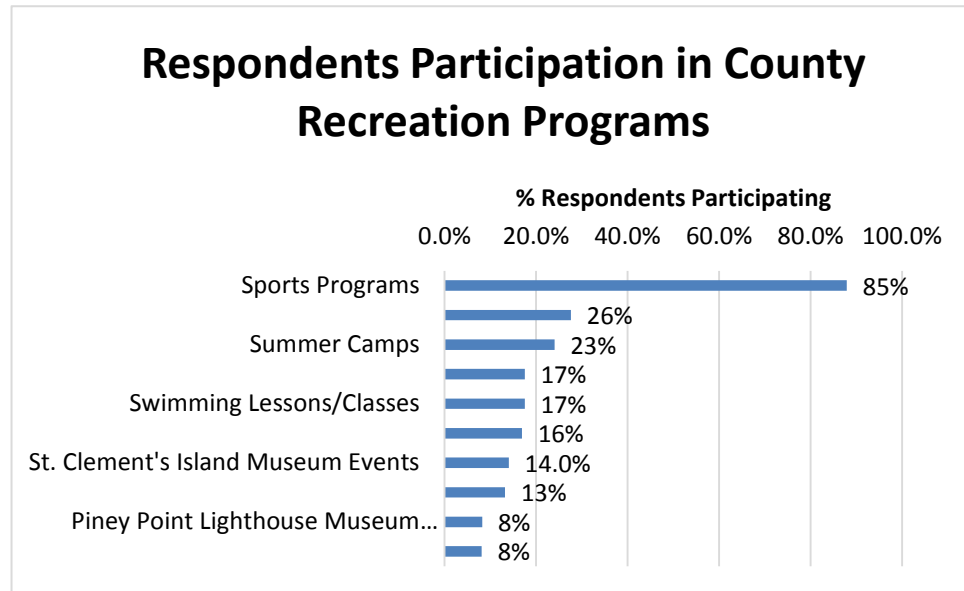
- Playgrounds, athletic fields, and other recreational opportunities for youth are important.
- The existing public County parks, recreation, and open space opportunities available to me in St. Mary's County are important.
- Creating new parks and open spaces, and providing new recreational opportunities for residents would enhance the community/County.
- New opportunities for walking, hiking, running and bicycling would enhance the community/County.
- Recreational amenities and programs for adults are important.
- Creating new and enhanced waterfront access for water-based recreation such as fishing, swimming, and boating is important.
- Enhancing cultural, historical and museum opportunities in the County would be beneficial.

10. What recreation programs offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks have you or your household participated in during the last 24 months (please select all that apply)?

Total responses:
1,103

Respondents were provided 15 program categories, and the choice of "other." A total of 77 "other" responses were made, many noting "pickleball" as the program they participated in. Based on responses, the top 5 programs that survey

respondents participated in were sports programs, special events, summer camps, gymnastics, and swimming lessons/classes. Nearly 85% of respondents indicated participation in sports programs.



11. How did you learn about the recreational, cultural and leisure services offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks?

Total Responses: 1,183

Respondents were provided with 7 answers to select from, including "other." Cumulatively, approximately 75% of respondents indicated they learned about Recreation and Parks services through referral/word of mouth, website, and program guides.

12. What recreation programs, facilities, or services would you like to see offered that currently are not available?

Total responses: 702

Each response included an idea, or multiple ideas for additional parks and recreation services respondents would like to offered, that are not currently available.



13. In what geographic area of the County would you like to see these recreational programs, facilities, or services?

Total responses: 1,113

Options offered to respondents included Central, South, or North County areas, or makes no difference. Most respondents, 43%, indicated they would like to see such enhancements made in the **central county** area.

14. Do you or members of your household use recreation services and facilities in other Maryland counties?

Yes: 53%, No: 47% Total responses: 1,163

A total of 506 comments were also received from respondents, many indicating usage of public parks and recreation facilities and services in nearby counties, including Charles and Calvert.

15. What parks, recreation, and cultural amenities in the County do you take visitors to see/experience?

Total responses: 623

Each response included one or more locations identified by respondents. Many responses were sites that offered outdoor recreation amenities and opportunities, and included numerous waterfront locations such as Piney Point, Point Lookout, St. Mary's River State Park, and historic sites including St. Mary's City and Historic Sotterley.

16. What existing parks, recreation, and cultural amenities in the County do you believe are most attractive to visitors?

Total responses: 547

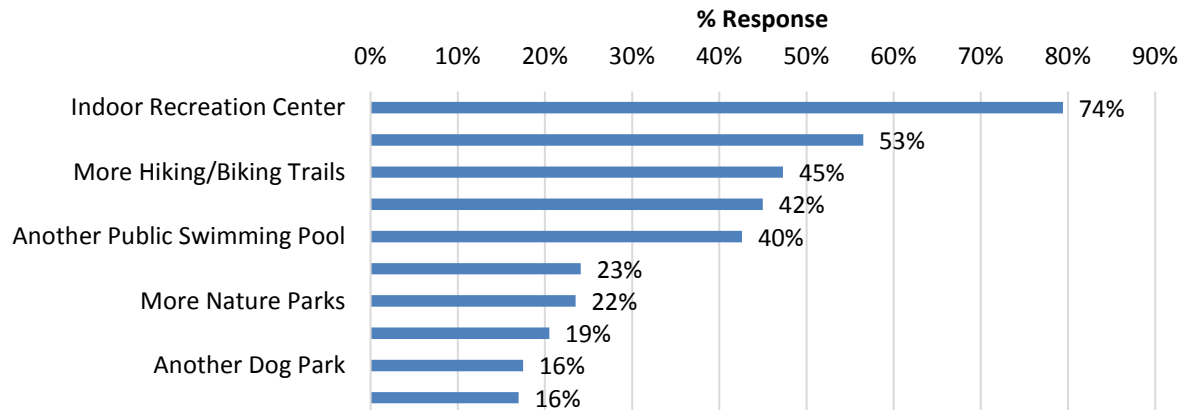
Each response included one or more locations identified by respondents. Overall, the responses to this question were similar to those of question #15 above. Waterfront locations and sites that provide opportunities for experiencing the history, culture, and natural environment of St. Mary's County were generally perceived to be attractive for visitors.

17. The population of St. Mary's County is expected to continue to grow into the foreseeable future. What parks, recreational facilities, or programs do you think will be most needed by the growing number of residents in the County?

Total responses: 1,141

Of the 15 choices offered to respondents, 74% selected an indoor recreation center, 53% an outdoor sports field complex, 45% more hiking/biking trails, and 42% more beach/water access.

Facilities Residents Perceived as Most Needed for the County's Growing Population



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Appendix E: 2016 Recreation and Parks Site Inventory

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Appendix E: St. Mary's County Public Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Inventory

Updated: August 28, 2017		County Acreage		Private/ quasi-public Acreage	State/Federal Acreage					Facilities (Number given refers to the number of facilities unless otherwise specified)																				
Election District	Site	Recreation	Resource		Recreation	Resource				Classification	Ownership	Comments	Baseball/softball Diamonds	Basketball Courts Outdoor	Tennis	Basketball (volleyball) courts Indoor	Other Court	Multi-Purpose Fields	Concession	Trail, hiker/biker (miles)	Swimming Pools	Beach (shore miles)	Playground (tot lot)	Picnic Pavilions	Picnic Tables	Hunting (acres)	Golf Courses	Fishing Pier (linear Feet)	Boat Ramps	Dog Parks (Acres)
1	Cardinal Gibbons Park	15				Community Park	County	Roads, walks, comfort station	3	2	1			1						1		4							4	50
1	Chancellor's Point Natural History Area				66	Natural Resource Area	State	Environmental Education Ctr. p/o St. Mary's City, leased to Bd. of Ed.												2										
1	Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center	45	431			Natural Resource Area	State	School Environmental Ed. Ctr./County Park with beach, bath house, 2 canoe launch areas, bay fishing, playground/85 acre hunting area						1		0.70		0.10	1	1	20	85						6	90	
1	Elms Property				542	Natural Resource Area	State	544 acre hunting area														544								25
1	Facchina Property		30			Natural Resource Area	County	Open space land for future park and recreation use or school																						
1	Fox Harbor Landing	1				Special Use Area	County	County pier																						4
1	Historic St. Mary's City					Historic/cultural	State	Premier outdoor living history museum and archeological park; walking path, open space/passive recreation								5.00														
1	Murry Road Waterfront Area	0.2				Special Use Area	County	Waterfront passive recreation open space use area																						
1	Patuxent River Naval Air Station Webster Field				693*	Special Use Area	Federal	Acres and Facilities NOT included in total - for military/DoD only- no public access. 683 acres hunting area, fishing pier		1*	1*	1*								683*		50*								25*
1	Point Lookout State Park					State Park	State	Fishing pier/100' fishing estuarine/pond, historic sites, museum, nature center, 2,000' swimming beach, bath house, playground, camping (tent/group/RV), 4 small boat ramps, 2 canoe ramps, admin./maint. building							3	3.00		2.00	3	1	175	240		710	4				32	500
1	Ridge Elem. School/Park	6				School Rec Park	County	Multi-purpose room	1			1																1	25	
1	St. Inigoes Public Landing	15				Special Use Area	County	Fishing pier, Smith Creek, 1 boat ramp										0.20		1	3			135	1			1	20	
1	St. Inigoes State Forest				911	Natural Resource Area	State	Hunting, forest game, waterfowl and deer (bow, muzzleloader, and shotgun) (aka Kits Point)													700									15
1	St. Mary's College of Maryland				21	School Rec Park	State	Facilities available to staff, students, alumni, guests, and special events, gym membership open to public		1	6	3		6			1	0.25							2			4	100	
Total		82	461	-	1,100	2,690			4	3	7	4	1	7	3	9	1	3	5	3	204	1,569	-	845	7	-	-	-	48	829
2	Piney Point Aquaculture Center				66	Natural Resource Area	State	Oyster propagation site ; site formerly known as "Aqua Foods Property"																						
2	Cecil Park (George E. Cecil Memorial Park)	60				Community Park	County	Acquisition by donation	4		4	1		1	1					1	1	20						6	100	
2	Drayden African-American Schoolhouse	1				Historic/cultural	County	County operated museum and cultural site, open space and lawn areas for passive recreation																						
2	Piney Point Elem. School	7				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, basketball courts, multipurpose space	1			1		1					1										25	
2	Piney Point Public Landing	1				Special Use Area	County	Fishing pier, 1 large double boat ramp, 100' fishing estuarine													4			97	1			2	25	
2	Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park	8				Special Use Area	County	Pier, Museum, Visitor Center - First Lighthouse on Potomac River									0.4			2								2	15	
2	Tall Timbers Landing	0				Special Use Area	County	Fishing pier; estimated acreage; no deed.																50						
Total		77	-	-	-	66			5	0	4	2	0	2	1	0	0	0.4	2	1	26	0	0	147	1	0	0	0	10	165
3	Abell's Wharf	1				Special Use Area	County	Breton Bay, 1 boat ramp										0.1						110	1			1	15	
3	Banneker Elementary School	8				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, multipurpose areas, playground	1			1							1										50	
3	Breton Bay Golf and Country Club			150		Special Use Area	Private	Private golf course open for public use																1						
3	Camp Calvert Landing	1				Special Use Area	County	Breton Bay, canoe/kayak launch only									0.1			1									2	
3	College of Southern Maryland	5				School Rec Park	County	open space for sports practice; indoor aquatics/fitness center						1		1	1												477	
3	Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County	43				Special Use Area	County	Managed by private non-profit organization, outdoor theater, events												1	75						150	10	200	
3	WF Duke Elem. School/former Hayden Property	20	160			School Rec Park	County	Elem & middle school site; Library/Senior Center; future community park athletic fields and facilities. Total site acreage 180 acres.	1		1		1						2											
3	Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center	6				School Rec Park	County	Playground, open space											1										50	
3	Leonardtown Elem. School/Park	6				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, basketball courts, playground	1			1		1					1									2	20	
3	Leonardtown High School	20				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, tennis courts, multipurpose areas	2		1			1					1										100	
3	Leonardtown Wharf Park	1				Special Use Area	Leonardtown	Waterfront park, seasonal concessions, canoe/kayak dock																			4	100		
3	Leonardtown Middle School	6				School Rec Park	County	Gymnasium	1		1		1																50	
3	Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery	3				Special Use Area	Leonardtown	Canoe and kayak launch, kayak rentals, green space, winery											1	2				1					50	
3	Newtowne Neck State Park				790	State Park	State	1 canoe and kayak launch area, hiking and hunting								1		1		2	600							1	20	
3	Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)	8				Community Park	County	Indoor recreation center (former drill hall)	1					3					1		4							6	50	
3	St. Clements Shores Park	10				Neighborhood Park	County	Ballfields, playground, picnicking	3										1	1	6	60						1	50	
Total		138	160	150	790	-			10	0	0	5	0	8	0	2	1	1.2	7	3	90	660	1	110	2		0	150	25	1234
4	Chaptico Park	250				Regional Park	County	Multipurpose fields, picnicking, hiking, playground							11	1	1			1	4							8	100	
4	Chaptico Wharf	1				Special Use Area	County	Wicomico River, 1 large boat ramp, 100' estuarine fishing, pier										0.1			2			140	1			2	20	
4	Chopticon High School	30				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, multipurpose fields, tennis courts	2		4	2		1															6	100
4	Margaret Brent Middle School	6				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, tennis courts, multipurpose areas	2	1	2	1																	4	
4	Margaret Brent Recreation Center	6				School Rec Park	County	Recreation center				1																	4	30
4	Wicomico Shores Golf Course	152				Special Use Area	County	Public 18-hole golf course & 11-tee driving range			2													1					6	50
4	Wicomico Shores Landing	3				Special Use Area	County	Wicomico River, pavilion, fishing pier/ estuarine, 1 small boat ramp									0.1	1	1	4				900	1			2	25	
Total		448	-	-	-	-			4	1	8	4	0	12	1	1	0	0.2	2	1	10	0	1	1040	2		0	0	12	435
5	5th District Park	85				Community Park	County	Pavilion, roads & parking, lighted fields, comfort station	3	1	2	1			9	1	1				1	20						8	200	
5	Country Lakes Park	57				Neighborhood Park	Private	Homeowners' Association, pavilion, county lease/maintenance	3	1	2									1	1	10						2	30	
5	Dennison Property		1			Special Use Area	County	Purchase to enhance Three Notch Trail																						
5	Laurel Ridge Park	7				Neighborhood Park	County	Ballfield	1																			1	30	
5	Lettie Marshall Dent. School	6				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, basketball court, playground, multipurpose areas	2	1		1		3					1										25	
5	Mechanicsville Elem. School	4				School Rec Park	County	Ballfields, basketball, playground	1	1		1		0					1									1	25	
5	Three Notch Trail	88				Special Use Area	County	Hiking/biking trail on railroad right-of-way. Phases 1, 2, p/o 4, 5, & 6 complete								11.25													100	
5	White Marsh Elem. School	3				School Rec Park	County	Ballfield, basketball, multi-purpose field	1			1		1					1										25	
Total		249	1	-	-	-			11	4	4	4	0	13	1	12.25	0	0	4	2	30	0	0	0	0		0	0	12	435
6	Clarke's Landing	0				Special Use Area	County	Acreage estimated: no deed; 1 small boat ramp																	1					
6	Forest Landing	2				Special Use Area	County	Fishing pier & public landing, 30' estuarine fishing													2			60	1			1	10	
6	Greenwell State Park				596	State Park	State	Equestrian center, fishing pier, 410 acres hunting, admin. building						1		10		2	1	1	10	187		190				4	50	
6	Hollywood Elem. School	7				School Rec Park	County	Soccer fields	1			1		1						1								2	50	
6	Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School					School Rec Park	County	Recreation Center, admin. building	1																			6	20	
6	Hollywood Soccer Complex	6				Community Park	County	Soccer fields						6														2	60	

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Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations

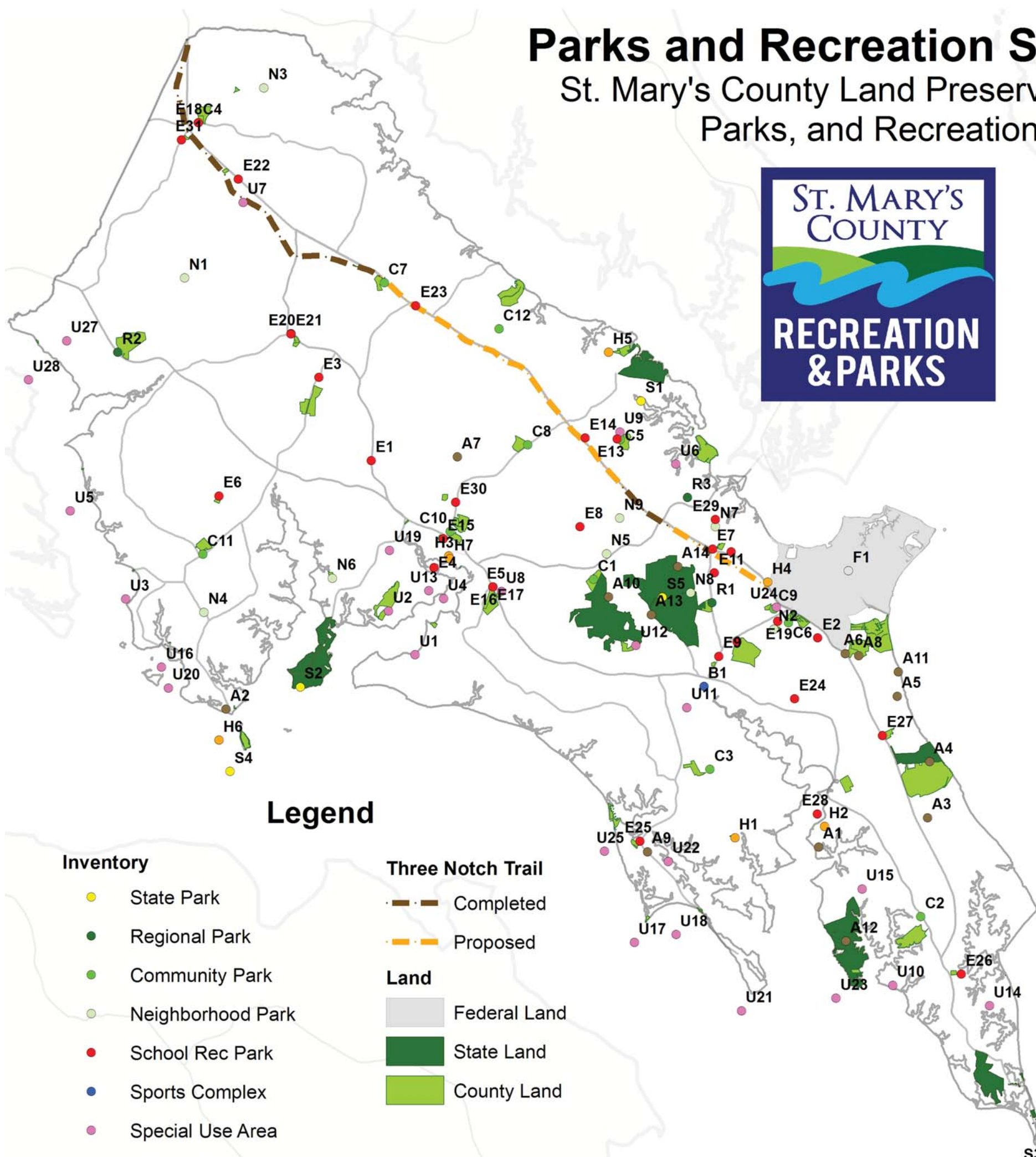
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St. Mary's County 2017 LPPRP Capital Improvement Recommendations																
						Est. Short-Range (2017-2022) Cost (\$1,000s)			Est. Mid-Range (2023-2028) Cost (\$1,000s)			Est. Long-Range (2029 and Beyond) Cost (\$1,000)			Park and Recreation Goals Served by Recommendation	
Project	Location (Election Dist)	Description	Total Estimated Cost (\$1,000s)	Fiscal Year Programmed	Acres to be Acq	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	State	County
Acquisition and Development Projects																
Patuxent River Waterfront Park	5th or 6th	Acquire & develop a waterfront park on the Patuxent River	5,000	FY17 and beyond	100-300	2,000							3,000		1, 2, 3, & 6	2
Lower Patuxent Public Landing	8th	Acquire & develop a public landing with boat ramp, pier and restroom	2,000	FY29 and beyond	3-5 ac							1,500	500		1, 2, 3, & 6	2
Central Patuxent Public Landing	6th	Acquire (easement) & develop public landing with boat ramp and pier	2,000	FY29 and beyond	3-5 ac							1,500	500		1, 2, 3, & 6	2
Wicomico Shores Landing Parking	4th	Acquire & develop additional parking by existing public landing	300	FY29 and beyond	1-2 ac							200	100		1, 2, 3, & 6	2 & 4
		Total Acq & Dev Costs for projects:	9,300			2,000						3,200	4,100			
		Cost of land Acq only for projects:	5,200													
Facility Development Projects																
Three Notch Trail Phases 7, 8, 9, and portions of Phase 3	California/Lex Park Area	Continue to develop trail from Wildewood north to Baggett Park in Mechanicsville; complete areas of Phase 3 from First Colony to WalMart (Phase 7 A/E FY15)	11,721	FY17 and beyond			3,633			5,088			3,000		1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	3 & 4
Leonardtown Park	Leonardtown (3rd)	Develop community park with athletic fields, playground, parking, restroom facilities, tennis/pickleball, dogpark, synthetic turf stadium (Prior funding in FY12 for studies/A&E)	4,286	FY20 (Dev) and beyond			2,286						2,000		1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	1
Chaptico Park	Chaptico (4th)	Construct athletic fields, basketball courts, picnic areas/shelters, tot lot, nature and equestrian trails, practice fields, and baseball softball fields	4,190	FY17 (Design) FY19 (Dev)			1,690						2,500		1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	1, 3, & 4
Central County Park	California/Lex Park (8th)	Develop athletic fields, recreation facilities, tennis complex	3,760	FY20 (Design) FY23 (Dev)			350			3,410					1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	1 & 4
Myrtle Point Park	California (8th)	Develop park facilities per master plan	2,795	FY20 (Design) FY22 (Dev)			2,795								1, 2, 3, & 5	1, 2, 3, & 4
Elms Beach Park	Lexington Park (8th)	Parking, restrooms, picnic areas, pathways (Concept FY16)	1,000	FY19 (Design) FY21 Development			1,000								1, 2, 3, & 5	3 & 4
Shannon Farm Park	Lexington Park (8th)	Design and construct a community park in Lexington Park	2,175	FY21 (Master Plan) FY22 (A/E) FY23 Development			75			2,100					1, 2, 3, & 5	3 & 4
Sports Complex	Leonardtown (3rd) or California (8th)	Build multi-field sports complex in Leonardtown or California area	10,950	FY22 (A/E) FY24 Development			445			10,505					1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	1
Recreation/Comm. Center	Lexington Park (8th) or Leonardtown (3rd)	Construct a Recreation Center of at least 70,000 s.f. at Nicolet Park or other feasible location; relocation of Gymnastics Center included in this project.	16,300	FY22 (A/E) FY24 Development			500			15,800					1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	1
		Total Facility Development Project Costs:	57,177				12,774			36,903			7,500			
Facility Rehabilitation and Development Projects																
Recreation Facility and Park Improvements and renovation	Countywide	Parks, Rec Centers, Facilites. Painting, lighting, fencing, irrigation, turf renovations, other improvements (dog park, spray ground, pickleball courts, skate park, etc.) at select locations	8,400	FY17-22				6,400			1,000			1,000	1, 2, & 3	4
Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Development	Piney Point (2nd)	Complete interior renovations; exhibit design and installation	100	FY17-22				100							1 & 2	4
St. Clement's Island Museum Renovatio	Colton's Point (7th)	Renovate facilities and exhibits	1,500	FY17 - FY22				1,500							1 & 2	2 & 4
Nicolet Park Entrance	Lexington Park (8th)	Design and construction park entrance (A/E in FY 14)	965	FY17 Development				965							1 & 2	4
Lancaster Park North Parcel	Lexington Park (8th)	Rehab former north/south parcels for passive urban park, disc/foot golf, pathways, Arts in Parks	500								500				1 & 2	4
St. Inigoes Landing	St. Inigoes (1st)	Replace bulkhead	190					190							1, 2, & 3	2 & 4
		Total Facility Rehab and Development Projects:	11,655					9,155			1,500			1,000		
		GRAND TOTAL:	78,132			2,000	12,774	9,155		36,903	1,500	3,200	11,600	1,000		












Appendix G: Park and Recreation Maps

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St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Inventory

-  State Park
-  Regional Park
-  Community Park
-  Neighborhood Park
-  School Rec Park
-  Sports Complex
-  Special Use Area
-  Historic/Cultural
-  Natural Resource Area
-  Federal
-  Main Roads

■ ■ Completed
 ■ ■ Proposed

- Federal Land
- State Land
- County Land



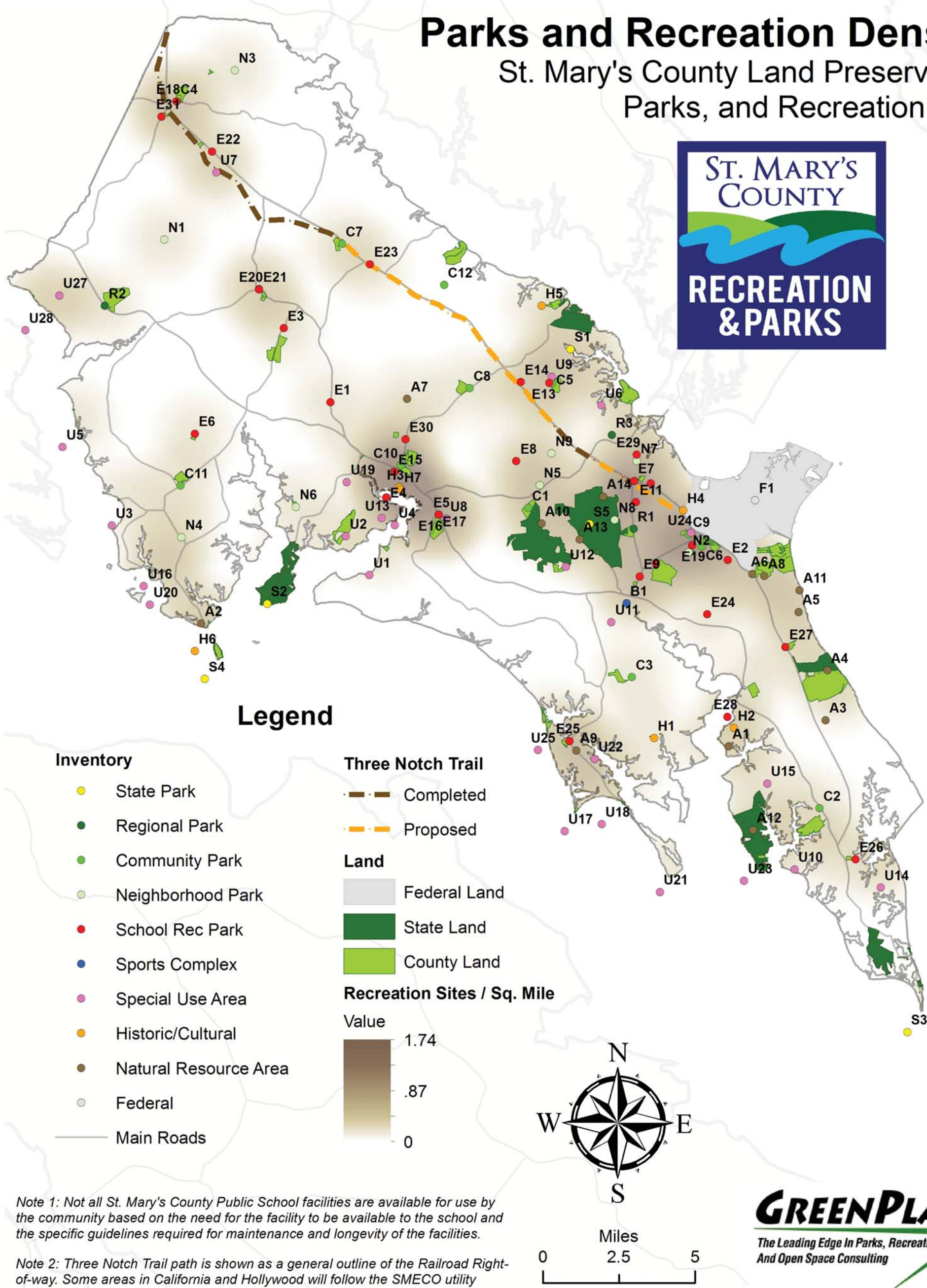
Miles
2.5 5

Note 2: Three Notch Trail path is shown as a general outline of the Railroad Right-of-way. Some areas in California and Hollywood will follow the SMECO utility corridor.

**The Leading Edge In Parks, Recreation
And Open Space Consulting**

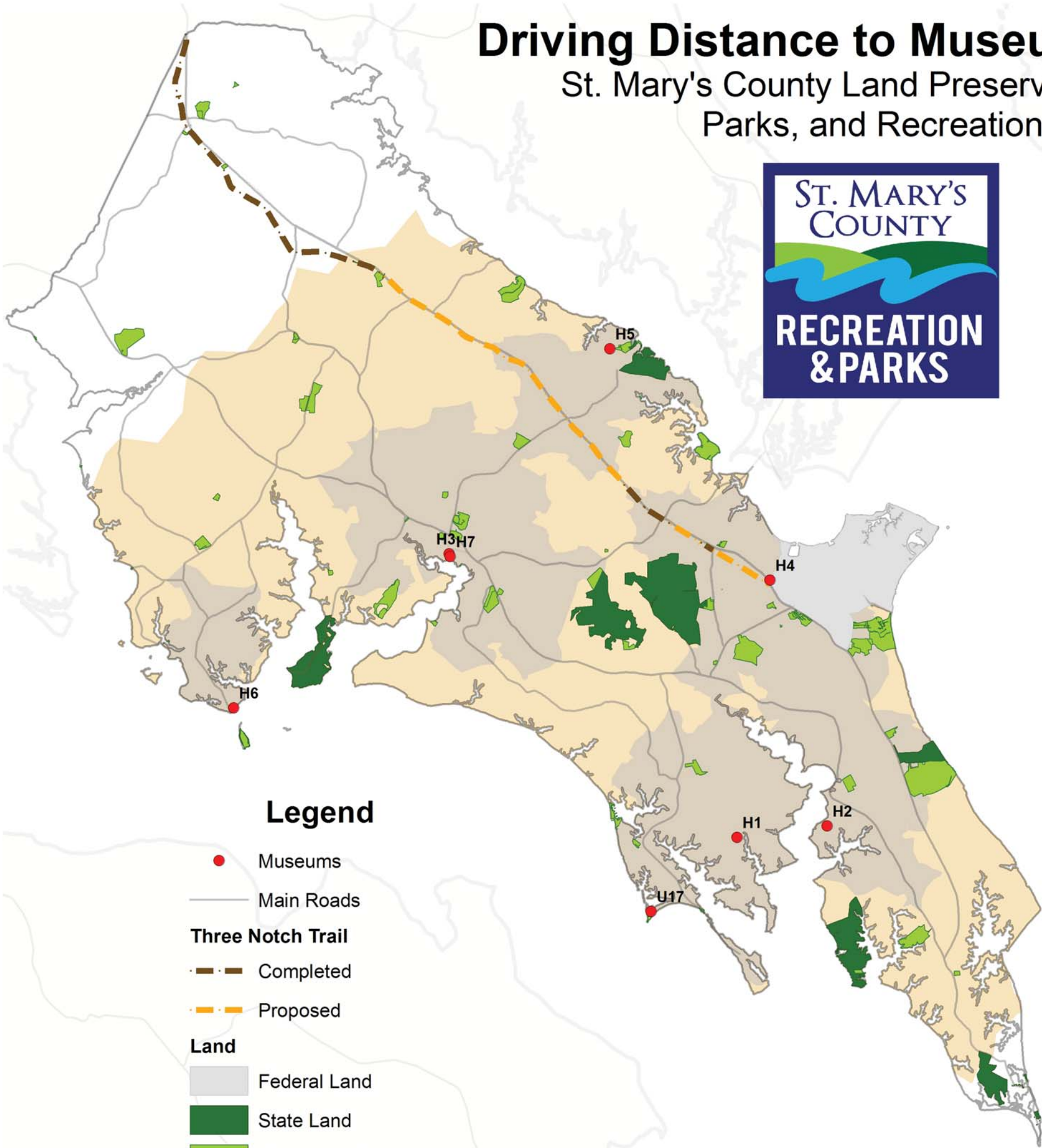
Parks and Recreation Density

St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



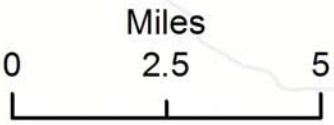
Driving Distance to Museums

St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

- Museums
- Main Roads
- Three Notch Trail**
 - Completed
 - Proposed
- Land**
 - Federal Land
 - State Land
 - County Land
- Driving Distance**
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes



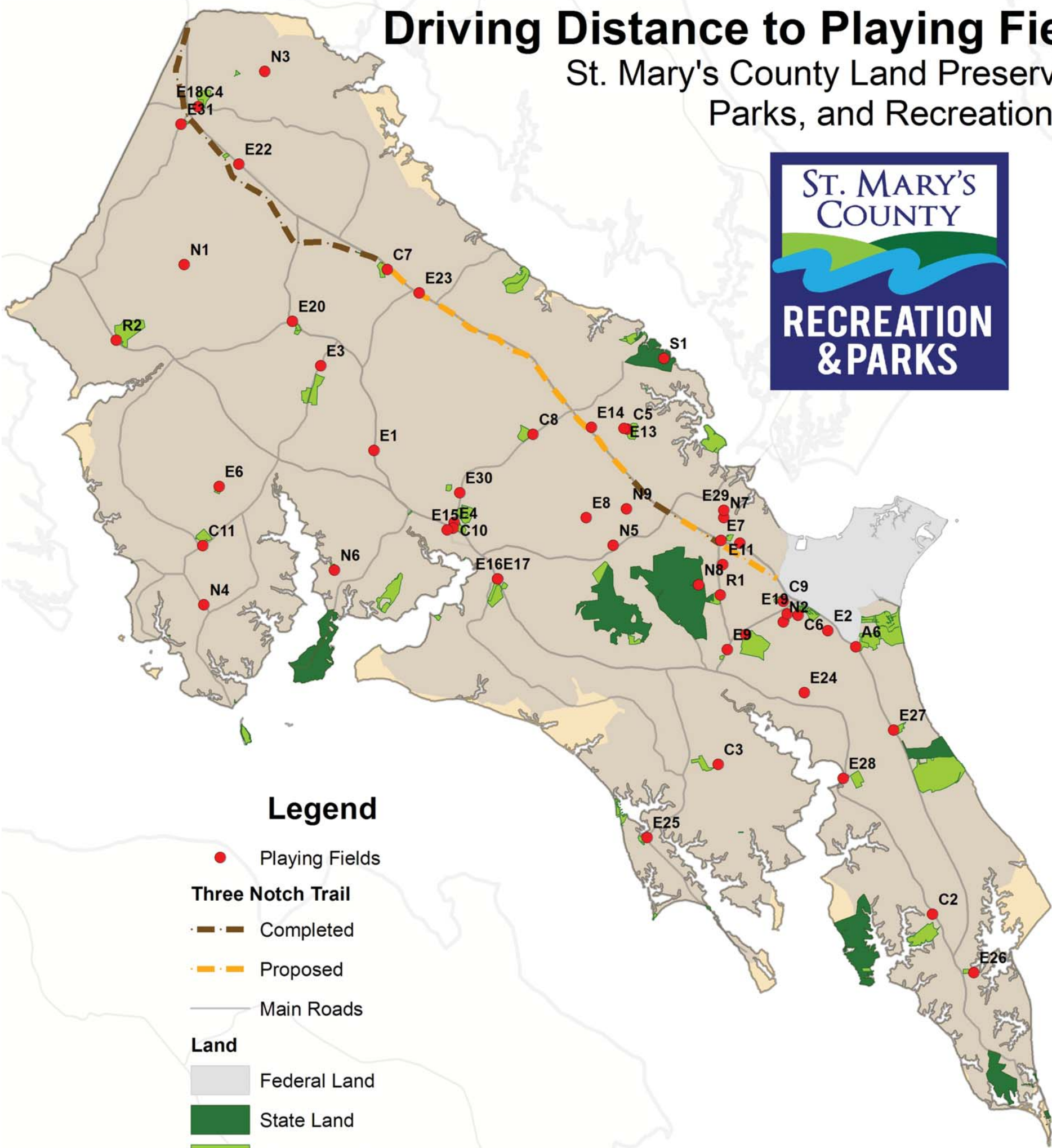
Note 1: Not all St. Mary's County Public School facilities are available for use by the community based on the need for the facility to be available to the school and the specific guidelines required for maintenance and longevity of the facilities.

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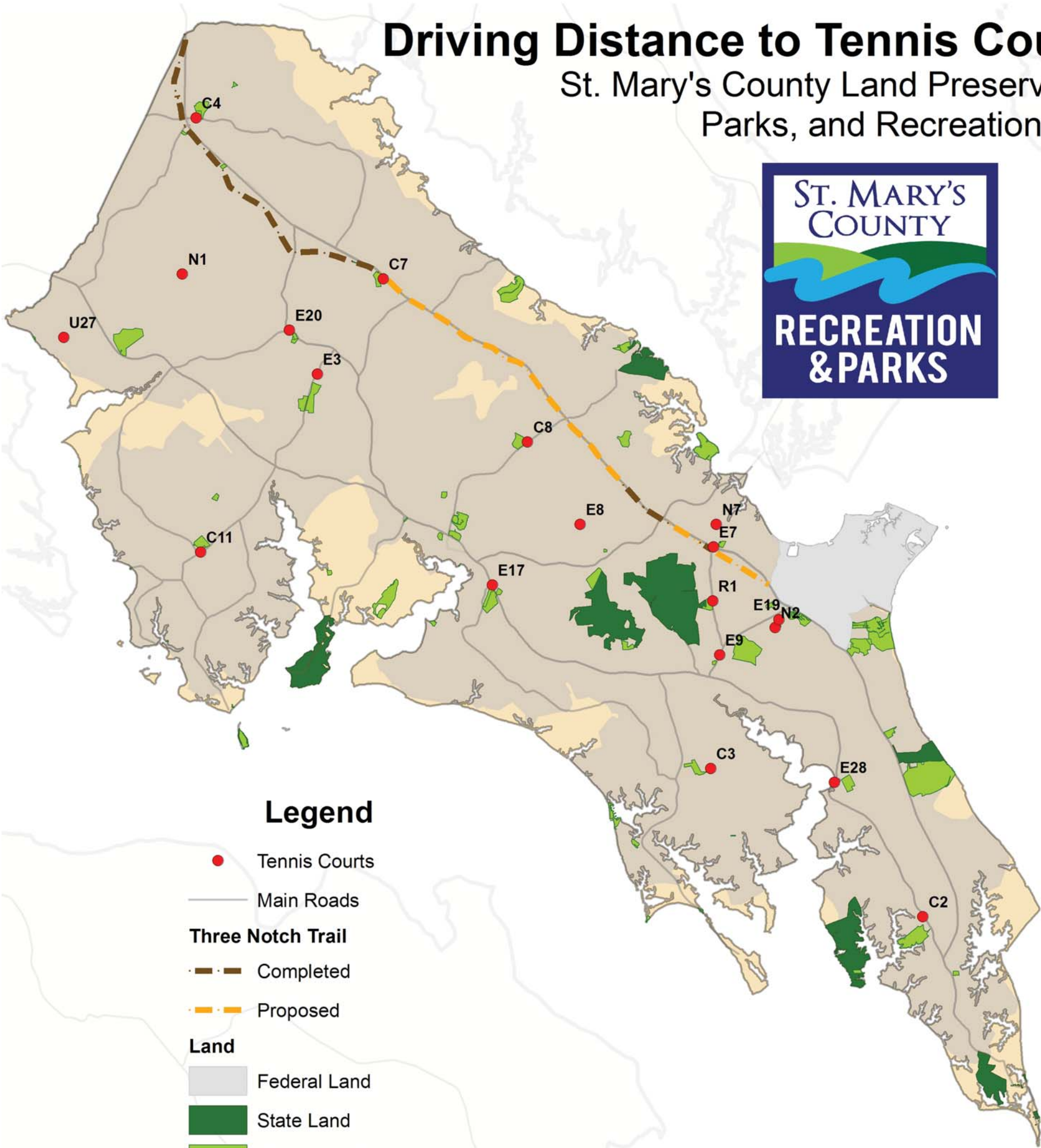
Driving Distance to Playing Fields

St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Driving Distance to Tennis Courts

St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

- Tennis Courts
- Main Roads
- Three Notch Trail**
 - - - Completed
 - - - Proposed
- Land**
 - Federal Land
 - State Land
 - County Land
- Driving Distance**
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes



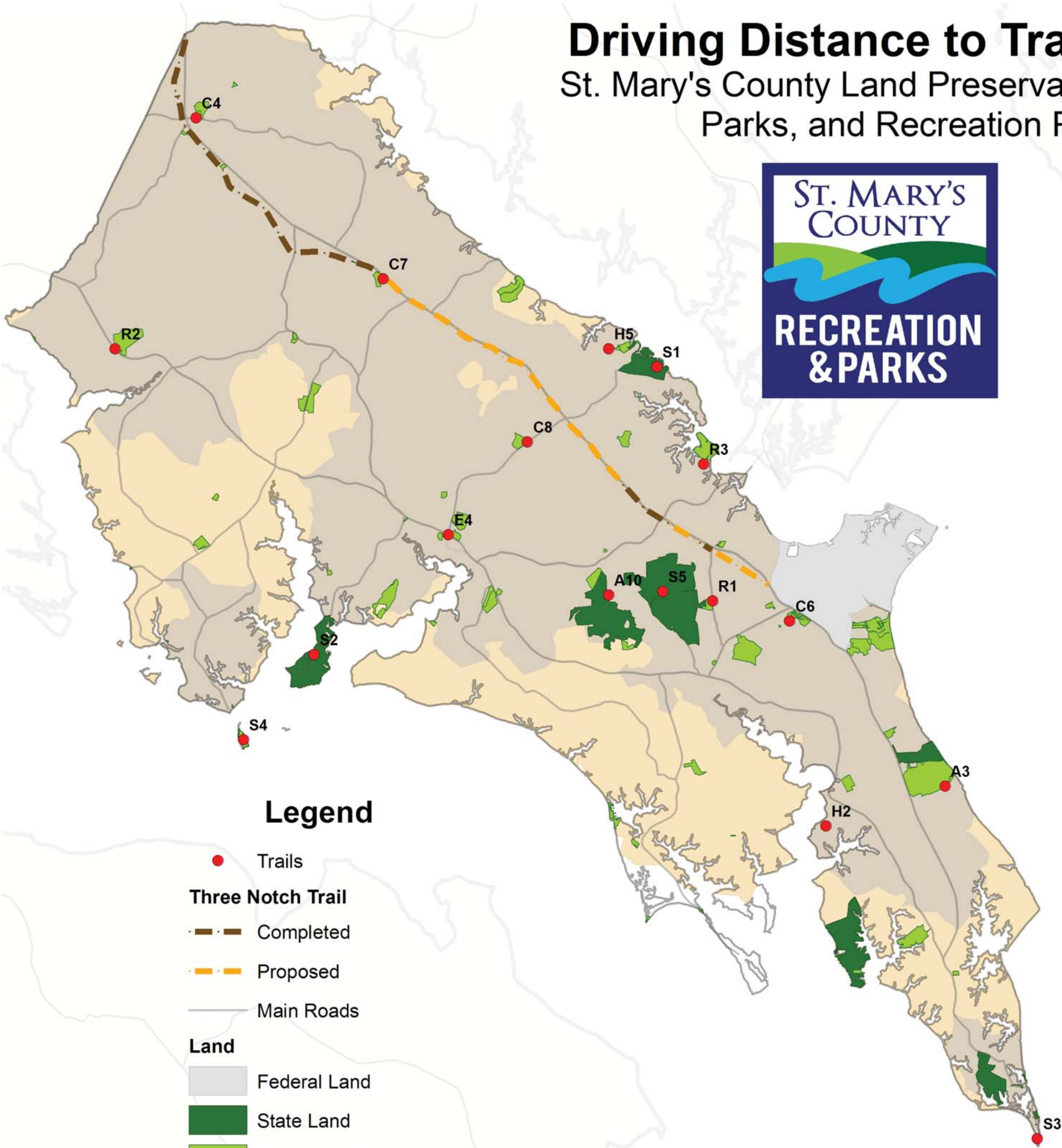
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Driving Distance to Trails

St. Mary's County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

- Trails
- Three Notch Trail
 - Completed
 - Proposed
- Main Roads
- Land
 - Federal Land
 - State Land
 - County Land
- Driving Distance
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes

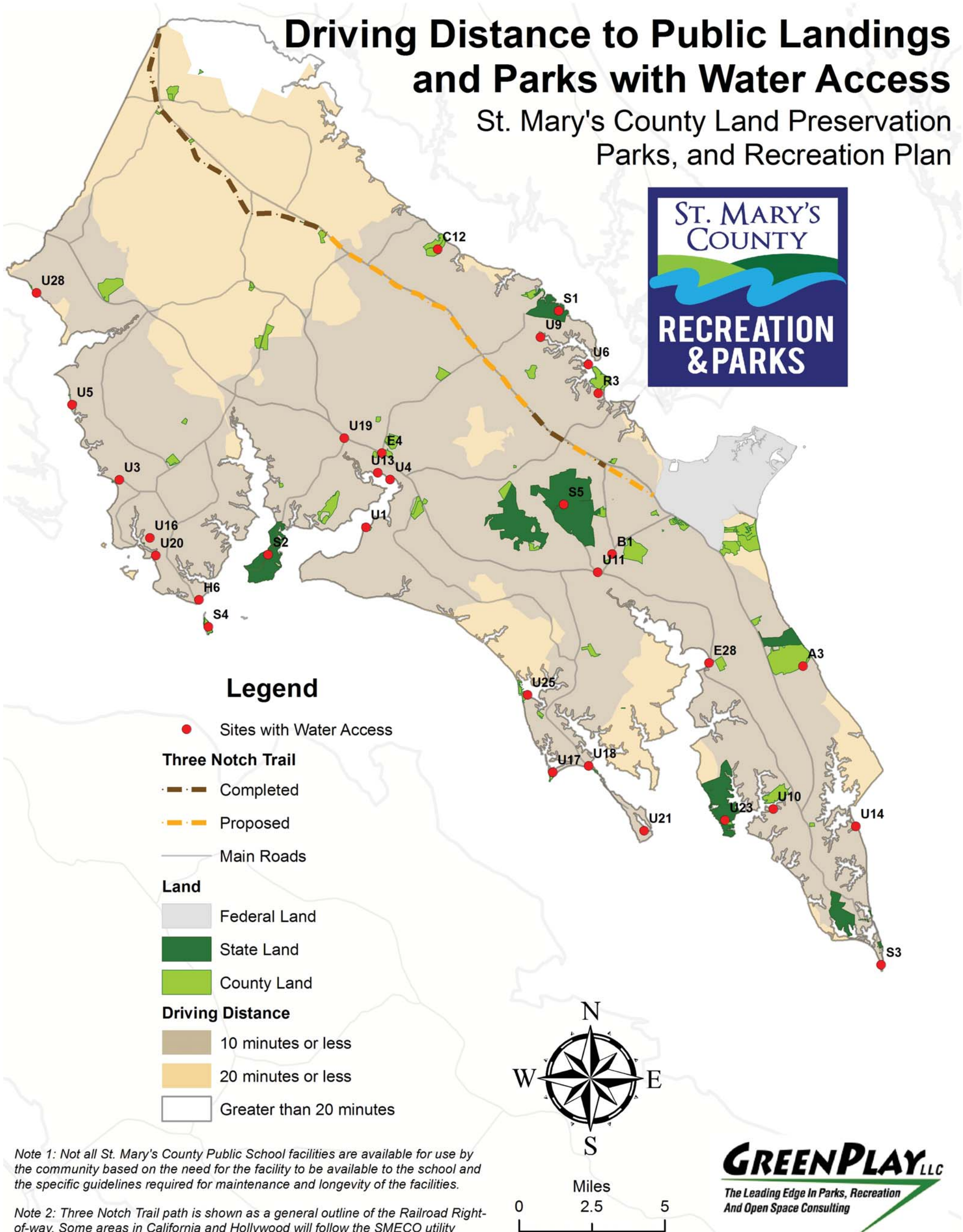
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Note 2: Three Notch Trail path is shown as a general outline of the Railroad Right-of-way. Some areas in California and Hollywood will follow the SMECO utility corridor.



Driving Distance to Public Landings and Parks with Water Access

St. Mary's County Land Preservation
Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

● Sites with Water Access

Three Notch Trail

— Completed

— Proposed

— Main Roads

Land

— Federal Land

— State Land

— County Land

Driving Distance

— 10 minutes or less

— 20 minutes or less

— Greater than 20 minutes

Note 1: Not all St. Mary's County Public School facilities are available for use by the community based on the need for the facility to be available to the school and the specific guidelines required for maintenance and longevity of the facilities.

Note 2: Three Notch Trail path is shown as a general outline of the Railroad Right-of-way. Some areas in California and Hollywood will follow the SMECO utility corridor.

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