



**Garrett County  
2017  
Land Preservation,  
Parks & Recreation  
Plan**



## **Acknowledgements**

### **Garrett County Commissioners**

Paul C. Edwards  
James C. Hinebaugh Jr.  
S. Larry Tichnell

### **Garrett County Planning Commission**

Tony Doerr, Chairman  
Jeff Conner, Vice Chairman  
Jeff Messenger, Secretary  
Tim Schwinabart  
Troy Ellington  
James Hinebaugh, Ex Officio  
Elizabeth Georg  
Bill Weissgerber, Alternate  
Bruce Swift, Alternate

### **Department of Planning and Land Management**

Deborah Carpenter, Director  
Bill DeVore  
Chad Fike  
J.B. Churchill

Cover pictures: Clockwise from top left: Bald Eagle at Finzel Swamp (courtesy of J.B. Churchill); Kayaking at Savage River Reservoir (Chad Fike); Muddy Creek Falls at Swallow Falls State Park (Chad Fike); Black Bear and Cub (Chad Fike); Preserved Farm in the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area (Chad Fike)

# THE BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

203 South Fourth Street - Courthouse - Room 207, Oakland, Maryland 21550  
www.garrettcountry.org • countycommissioners@garrettcountry.org  
301-334-8970 301-895-3188 FAX 301-334-5000

## Board of Commissioners

Paul C. Edwards  
James C. Hinebaugh, Jr.  
S. Larry Tichnell

County Administrator  
Kevin G. Null

County Attorney  
Gorman E. Getty III

## RESOLUTION 2017 - 9

WHEREAS, Subsection 5 905(c) 2 Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland authorizes and requires counties to prepare and adopt a Plan for the general purpose of establishing a comprehensive strategy for the protection and appropriate use of land-based and water-oriented resources of the County including acquisition goals and projected needs for recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, a Plan entitled the GARRETT COUNTY 2017 LAND PRESERVATION PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN has been prepared in cooperation with the County Planning and Land Management department; and

WHEREAS, Garrett County has by duly adopted resolution of the Board of County Commissioners appointed a Planning Commission to exercise the powers and duties conferred by Article 66B; and

WHEREAS, Said Garrett County Planning Commission, acting with the advice and assistance of the citizens of the County has recommended adoption of the GARRETT COUNTY 2017 LAND PRESERVATION PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN; and

WHEREAS, Said Plan is designed and intended to determine needs for agricultural and forest preservation, demand for recreation areas and protection of unique natural areas for the present and future residents of Garrett County; and

WHEREAS, Said Plan has been subject to public review and to public hearing; and


WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissions have carefully considered said Plan together with the comments and suggestions regarding said Plan and find that said Plan constitutes a suitable rational and timely plan to preserve agricultural and forest land, provide recreation areas and facilities and protect unique natural areas

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the document entitled "GARRETT COUNTY 2017 LAND PRESERVATION PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN" is hereby adopted as the Recreation Plan for Garrett County.

DULY ADOPTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND  
THIS 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2017

  
PAUL C. EDWARDS  
Chairman

  
JAMES C. HINEBAUGH  
County Commissioner

  
S. LARRY TICHNELL  
County Commissioner

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners at a regular meeting held October 17, 2017; and I further certify I am the County Administrator for the said County Commissioners charged with the responsibility of keeping and recording all minutes, records and acts of the said Board of County Commissioners; and I further certify that Paul C. Edwards, James C. Hinebaugh, and S. Larry Tichnell to be the appropriate officials to sign the same resolution.

  
Kevin G. Null  
County Administrator

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# Chapter 1-Plan Introduction

## Purpose

The State of Maryland requires that counties update their Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) every five years; one year prior to the revision of the statewide Maryland Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. The LPPRPs qualify local governments for State Program Open Space (POS) grants and other programs related to three land resource elements: recreation and parks; agricultural land preservation; and natural resource land conservation.

This 2017 LPPRP has been developed in accordance with guidelines developed in 2015 by the Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources. The main purpose for the 2017 Garrett County LPPRP is to identify future needs and priorities for parks, recreation and open space acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation in the County and its eight incorporated towns. These needs and priorities serve as a guide for land acquisitions and capital investments in the County's and towns' Capital Improvements Programs. Upon adoption, this 2017 LPPRP replaces the 2012 LPPRP and becomes one of a number of functional plans that help implement the Garrett County Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 1 includes; general geographic information, general population/demographic information and introduction to and map of the entire system of public parks and recreation facilities and preserved natural resource and agricultural land.

Chapter 2 includes a Parks and Recreation executive summary and an overview of the parks and recreation system in the County. This chapter also includes a summary of parks and recreation focused information including relevant summary information from existing County plans and other pertinent public information and directs readers to other plans, program documents, reports or resources that provide more in-depth information. A discussion of County and state goals concerning parks and recreation, a list and summary of programs/funding sources used to achieve those goals, and inventory of existing public parks and recreation facilities, a discussion of user demand, a level of service analysis and a discussion of the capital improvement plan are also included. The chapter also includes a section updating trail planning efforts and new trail construction in the County, with a continued focus on developing and interconnecting trails.

Chapter 3 is the Natural Resource and Land Conservation chapter. This chapter includes an overview of Natural Resource land conservation in the County along with County goals for natural resource land conservation. Included is an inventory of protected natural resource lands, mapping and a plan for implementing ordinances and programs.

Chapter 4 Addresses Agricultural Land Preservation in the County. This chapter includes an overview of Agricultural Land Preservation in the County along with County goals and an inventory of existing preserved agricultural land and associated mapping.

## Process

The 2017 LPPRP was prepared by the Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management (the Department). The 2017 LPPRP references and incorporates information from the 2012 LPPRP prepared by Environmental Resources Management of Annapolis, Maryland. In addition, data and information from various other County documents are included where relevant. These documents include but are not limited to the 2008 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan, the 2004 Deep Creek Lake Boating

and Commercial Use Carrying Capacity, and the 2011 Garrett County Heritage Area Management Plan. Data from State agencies such as the Maryland Department of Planning and Federal agencies such as the US Census Bureau were incorporated into this plan. In addition, the Department provided all GIS mapping incorporated herein.

The eight incorporated towns in Garrett County were solicited for comments via a letter circulated in January of 2016. Also in January of 2016, the Department released an on-line survey to the general public seeking input and comments in identifying needs and future priorities. The survey was advertised in local papers, utilizing local organization's email listings, and via the County website. The survey was available until March of 2016.

A draft of this plan was completed by fall of 2016 and underwent internal review. It was then sent to the eight municipalities and forwarded to the DNR and MDP for initial review and comment. Comments were received and incorporated into the document. The Garrett County Planning Commission reviewed the draft in January of 2017 during their regular monthly public meeting. After a secondary review by MD DNR and MDP and subsequent inclusion of more comments the document was forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners in September of 2017. The Board held a public hearing on October 2, 2017, held the opportunity for additional public comment open for two weeks and adopted the plan on October 17, 2017.

## **County Geography**

Garrett County is Maryland's westernmost County. It is bordered to the north by the Mason–Dixon line with Pennsylvania, to the south by the Potomac River and West Virginia, to the west by a border with West Virginia, and to the east with Allegany County, Maryland. Garrett County contains eight incorporated towns: Accident, Deer Park, Friendsville, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Loch Lynn Heights, Mountain Lake Park and Oakland. See Figure 1-1 to view a locational map.

The County is located entirely within the highland zone of the Appalachian Mountains, also known as the Allegheny Mountains, the Allegheny Plateau, and the Appalachian Plateau. The County's highest elevations are located along four ridges that range to a height of 3,360 feet at Hoyer-Crest along Backbone Mountain, the highest point in the state of Maryland. As is typical in the Allegheny region, broad flats generally lie below the ridge crests that range in elevation from 2,500 to 3,000 feet. The center of the County is dominated by Deep Creek Lake, the largest inland body of water in the State with 69 miles of shoreline, and an elevation of 2462 feet above sea level. The lake is home to a wide variety of freshwater fish and aquatic birds and covers approximately 3,900 acres.

Garrett County is drained by two major river systems, the Potomac and the Youghiogheny Rivers. The Savage River drains the eastern third of the County and empties into the Potomac at Bloomington. The Potomac is part of the Chesapeake Bay drainage system. The Casselman River, a tributary of the Youghiogheny, flows north from the County's central section into western Pennsylvania. The Youghiogheny River drains the western and central portions of the County and also flows north into Pennsylvania, where it empties into the Monongahela River, eventually flowing into the Mississippi River.

Garrett County contains approximately 419,293 acres (655 square miles). It is the second-largest County in Maryland by land area. According to MD DNR's FY16 DNR Owned Lands Acreage Report, the County contains over 87,653 acres of parks, lakes, and publicly accessible forestland, approximately 20% of the County's land area. The 2010 Land Use Summary from the Maryland Department of Planning indicates that approximately 284,457 acres (68%) of the County is forested, while about 89,323 acres (21%) is used for agriculture and approximately 1% is water cover. Most of the remaining 41,797 acres (10%) of total developed lands in the County are located in and around the eight incorporated towns,

areas in proximity to interchanges of Interstate 68 and around Deep Creek Lake. A total of 377,496 acres within the County (90%) are listed as resource lands (see Figure 1-2).

Garrett County's environmental assets include scenic and wild rivers; three significant manmade lakes; large tracts of forested areas; the Allegheny Mountains and rolling rural landscapes. This abundant natural beauty is appreciated not only by residents, but also by outdoor enthusiasts that regularly visit the County's many state parks and forests, for its hunting, fishing, biking, world class whitewater, boating, and winter sports opportunities. The County's natural resources have benefited greatly from the preservation afforded by a high level of recreation and resource land owned by the State of Maryland, other governmental agencies, the towns, large private tracts owned by mining and timber companies and various conservation organizations.

Figure 1-1

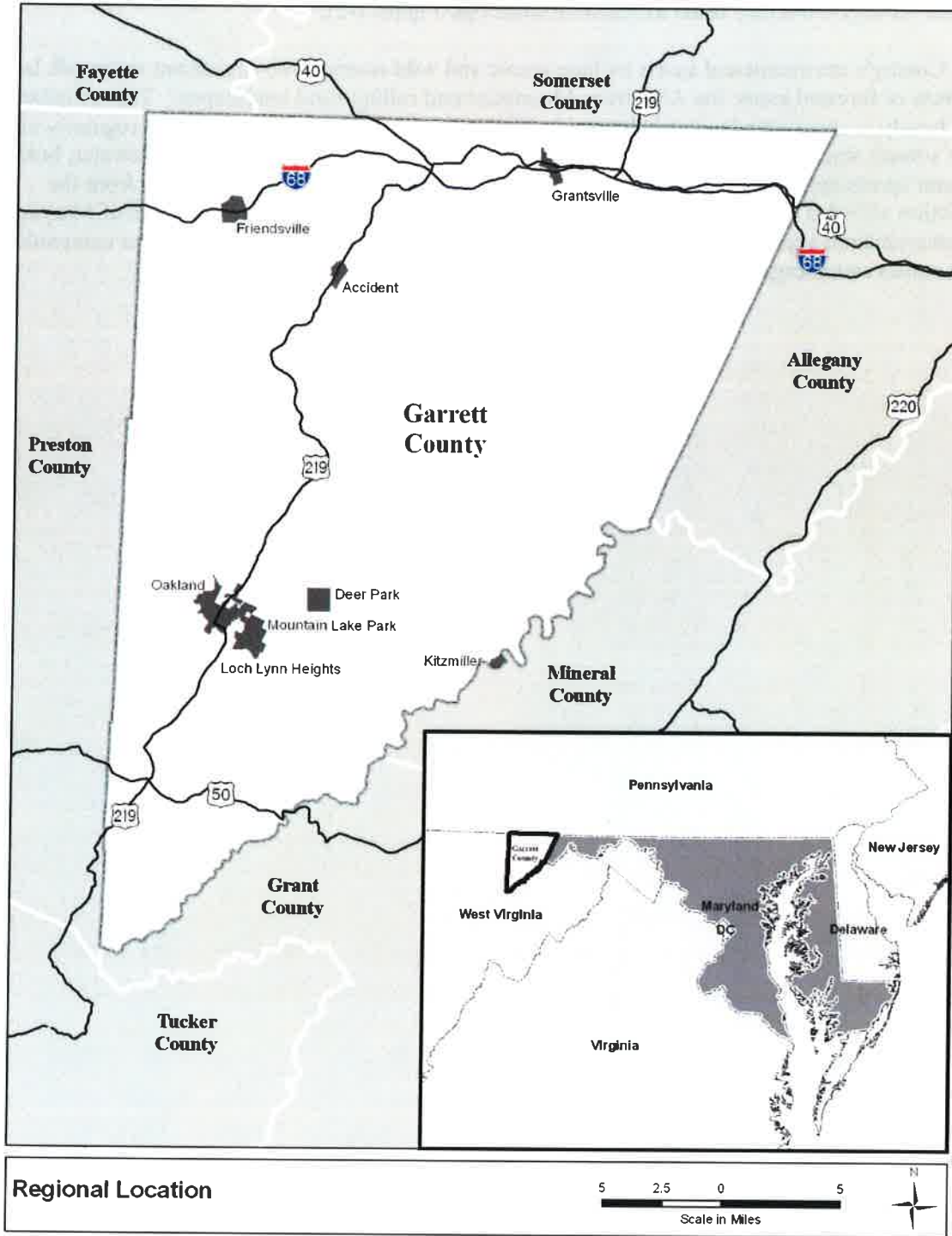
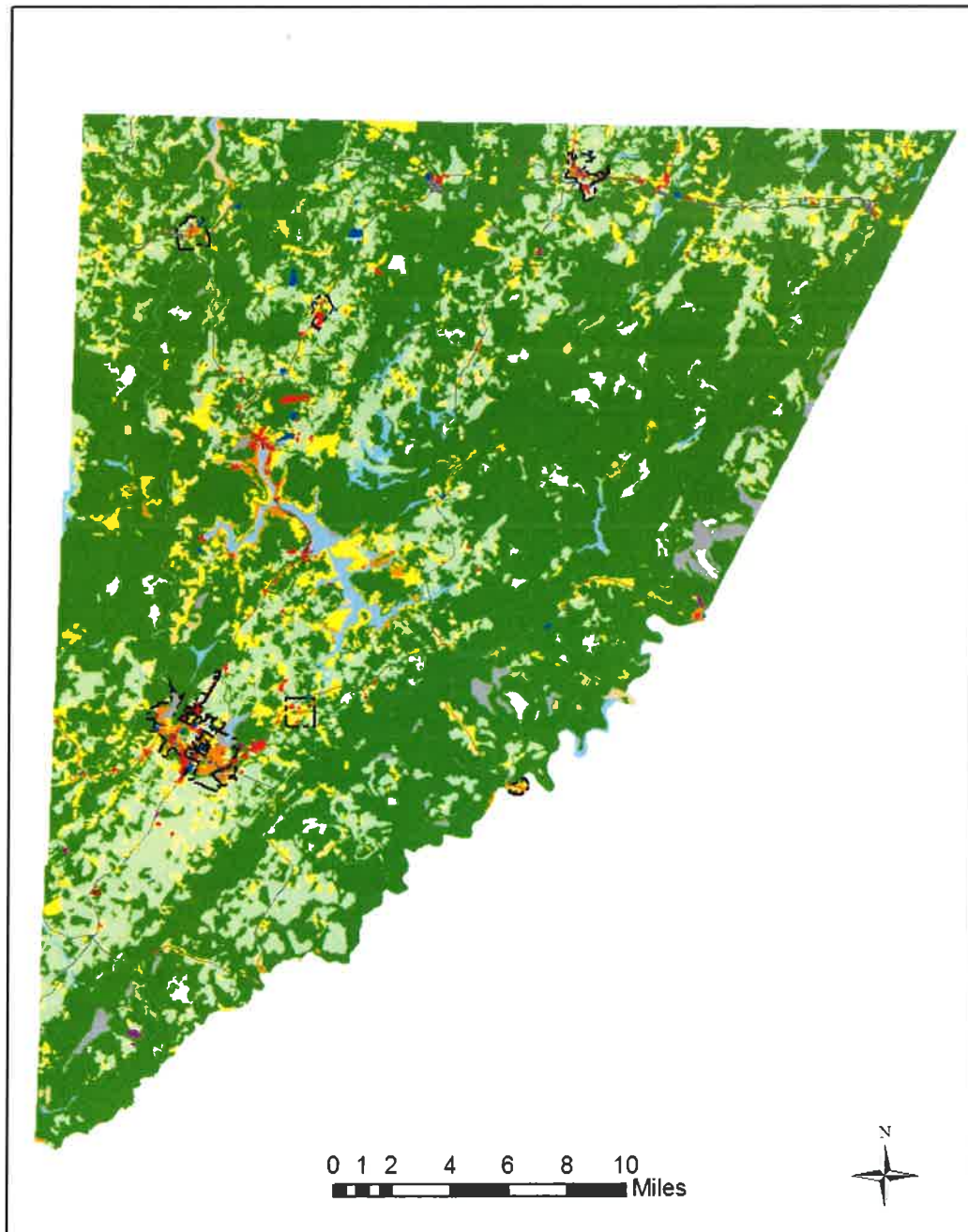




Figure 1-2



**2010 Land Cover**

- |                              |                            |                       |                |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Municipalities               | Medium Density Residential | Institutional         | Water          |
| Major Roads                  | High Density Residential   | Other Developed Lands | Wetlands       |
| Very Low Density Residential | Commercial                 | Agriculture           | Barren Land    |
| Low Density Residential      | Industrial                 | Forest                | Transportation |

## General Population /Demographic Information

As of the 2010 Census, the County's total population was 30,097. While the three adjoining towns of Mountain Lake Park, Oakland, and Loch Lynn Heights contain the large majority, 66%, of the County's town dwelling population, 77% of the County's residents live in the unincorporated area. The table below shows the distribution of this population among the County's eight towns and unincorporated areas. The County experienced a population increase of 251 residents between 2000 and 2010; however, the population of the towns increased by only six persons, while the population of the unincorporated area increased by 245.

### *Population Distribution 2000 and 2010*

Location	Population		2010 % of County Population	Change 2000 - 2010	
	2000	2010		Number	Percent
Unincorporated	22,981	23,226	77%	245	1%
All Towns	6,865	6,871	23%	6	0%
Accident	353	325	1%	-28	-8%
Deer Park	405	399	1%	-6	-1%
Friendsville	539	491	2%	-48	-9%
Grantsville	619	766	3%	147	24%
Kitzmilller	302	321	1%	19	6%
Loch Lynn Heights	469	552	2%	83	18%
Mountain Lake Par	2,248	2,092	7%	-156	-7%
Oakland	1,930	1,925	6%	-5	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,846</b>	<b>30,097</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>1%</b>

Source: 2010 Census

Although the County is currently experiencing a population decline, the County's long term population projection is to increase to 31,200 by 2025. The 2015 population estimate is 29,460, down 637 people from 2010 numbers. It is yet to be determined whether this trend will continue or whether the projection of an overall increase by 2025 will hold true. While the projected increase is a change of only 1,103 persons, it represents a significant change in age distribution. The population age 19 and under is projected to decrease by approximately 879 persons and will represent 21% of the population, down from 25%. The population age 65 and over is projected to increase by about 2,179 and will comprise 24 percent of the population in 2025 compared to 17 percent in 2010.

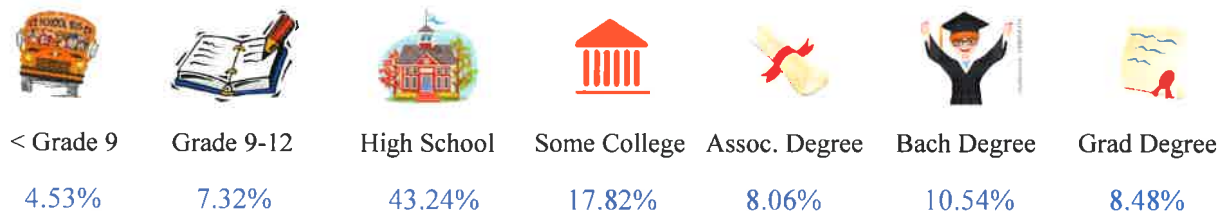
### *Garrett County 2010 Population and 2025 Population Projection*

Age	2010		2025	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-19	7,509	25%	6,630	21%
20-64	17,357	58%	17,160	55%
65+	5,231	17%	7,410	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,097</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31,200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Maryland Dept. of Planning's Demographic and Socio-Economic Outlook, Revised January 2015

Other important demographic information:

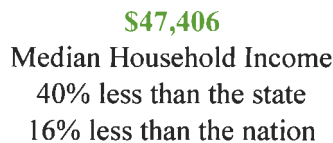
Education:



Labor Force:



Income and Spending:



13.8% of County residents fall below the poverty level with 12% having no health insurance. Racial diversity is minimal at an estimated 97.4% white (2011-2015 estimate), with a negligible amount of residents who speak a language other than English.

An important consideration when formulating the LPPRP is the impact of additional visitors and vacation homeowners to the year round resident population. Since the area is considered a premier vacation destination, the County experiences a pronounced influx of people, especially in the Deep Creek Lake area, during the summer, the winter ski season, holiday weekends and during certain special events. Annually, the County is host to visitors who come to take advantage of boating, bicycle events such as the Gran Fondo, the Savageman Triathlon, hiking, kayaking, winter sports, the manmade and natural whitewater features and other outdoor activities. The County population can more than double during these periods. It is understood that these visitors are largely seeking outdoor recreational activities along with the peace and tranquility associated with a low population density, reduced road traffic and pristine landscapes.

A study in 2003, estimated the peak-day population in the Deep Creek area to be 27,044 compared to a year round population of 4,246<sup>1</sup>. This study is dated, and has not been repeated. However, the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce conducts research to determine the number of visitors to the Deep Creek Lake area on a regular basis. Their most recent research indicates that 1.2 million visitors frequent Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County every year. The recreational needs of this large and vital short-term population are an important consideration. For example, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimated that one and one-half million people visited Deep Creek Natural Resource Management Area, Deep Creek State Park, Herrington Manor State Park, Jennings Randolph Lake and Swallow Falls State Park in 2009<sup>2</sup>. Though the population of the County averages just 30,000 residents, the visitors from the immediate region and the outlying areas are attracted by the County’s recreational opportunities and amenities.

[1] Source: 2004 Deep Creek Lake Boating & Commercial Use Carrying Capacity Assessment (ERM)  
 [2] Source: Garrett County Heritage Area Management Plan, October 2011

While over three-quarters of Garrett County residents live outside of an incorporated town, many of the parks, playgrounds and team based sports activities are located within the eight towns. Consideration must be made for travel time by participants, the availability of volunteers for coaching, coordination, scheduling, maintenance and fund raising efforts. Parking availability, County infrastructure, local law enforcement and weather conditions are also important concerns of some of the annual popular events that are held in the County. Other considerations are the recreational needs of the aging resident population, the changing popularity of certain sports activities, newly popular eco-friendly life styles and the improvement in information technology and internet access that allows for longer visits and added recreational activities.

Though future population growth is expected to be modest, it is also expected that increased leisure time and the County's favorable geographic location should increase visitors and part-time residents to the area. The local economy of the region is dependent on continuing to provide the amenities that fulfill the needs of the resident population and also attract the many visitors to the area. The County's numerous parks, preserved land, accessible state owned forest land and numerous recreational opportunities are especially important to attract these visitors and sustain the needs of the County's residents.

## **Network Introduction**

Garrett County has a robust system of parks and recreation, natural resource lands and agricultural lands. In fact, so much of the County's land area is covered by these features that one map depicting the entire system would be unreadable. In addition there is much overlap between features which would be hard to differentiate on one map. For example, all water features are natural resource areas, but not all water features are publicly accessible for recreational purposes. Therefore, these maps are available for view separately in the Appendices.

Appendix A illustrates Garrett County's Parks Inventory Map. The map includes parks and recreational sites owned by municipalities, the Garrett County Board of Education, and state and federal agencies. The County does not directly operate or maintain any parks or recreational sites. Certain water features are included as sites for public recreation. All publicly accessible water features are also included, as these sites are often used for rafting, kayaking or fishing.

Appendix B illustrates Garrett County's Natural Resource Areas. We have defined those areas as state and federal owned lands, forested areas and water features. All state and federal owned lands are forested but not all forested areas are state or federally owned, so overlap exists between these features as well.

Appendix C illustrates Garrett County's Land Preservation mapping. Depicted on this map are easements and districts associated with the Rural Legacy, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Garrett County's Agricultural Preservation District and Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) Easement programs.

Each of these maps and their associated programs will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

## Chapter 2. Recreation, Parks and Open Space

### 1. Executive Summary / Overview of the Parks and Recreation System in the County

This chapter provides an overview of Garrett County's public parks and recreation system. The table below provides details regarding ownership and acreage of recreation and resource lands in the County. Garrett County has nearly 72,000 acres of recreation land, of which Garrett County owns approximately 630 acres.

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Recreation Acres</b>	<b>Resource Acres</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
Board of Education	241.6	0.0	241.6
Garrett County	632.8	0.0	632.8
Towns	543.9	1.8	545.7
Garrett College	48.1	0.0	48.1
<b>Total Local</b>	<b>1,466.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1,468.2</b>
State	66,133.0	21,520.0	87,653.0
Federal	3,164.0	0.0	3,164.0
<b>Total State &amp; Federal</b>	<b>69,297.0</b>	<b>21,520.0</b>	<b>90,817.0</b>
<b>Total private/quasi-public</b>	<b>1,232.3</b>	<b>3,321.0</b>	<b>4,553.3</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>71,995.7</b>	<b>24,842.8</b>	<b>96,838.5</b>

Note: State lands numbers were based on MD DNR calculations.

An updated inventory of existing public parks and recreation facilities in the County is provided as Appendix D. This inventory was completed as part of the 2012 LPPRP and that data was used as a basis for the inventory. A map that shows the location of the County's parks and recreation facilities can be found in Appendix A.

#### State and Federal Owned

Deep Creek Lake is located in the center of the County and is the largest inland body of water in Maryland. The State owned, man-made lake covers approximately 3,900 acres and has 69 miles of shoreline. The lake was purchased by the State of Maryland, in the year 2000, from the Pennsylvania Electric Company and public access to the lake is mainly provided by Deep Creek Lake State Park. Fishing is popular on the lake, for species such as pike, bass and walleye. Recreational boating is also popular in the summertime.

#### County Owned

Garrett County does not directly operate or maintain the recreation land it owns. Operation and maintenance is generally the responsibility of local groups and organizations under lease agreements with the County. For example, although the Casselman Valley Soccer Complex is owned by Garrett County the Casselman Valley Soccer Association is responsible for upkeep, scheduling for the facility and obtaining funding for improvements. The Department of Public Works-Roads Division sometimes assists with labor and/or materials for park or trail improvements.

The County Commissioners now serve as the Board of Directors for the Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI), which was home to the 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. The complex includes a manmade white water course near Deep Creek Lake. Though still an independent

501c3 organization, the Garrett County Commissioners are the Board of Directors for ASCI and oversee the direction of the center.

Recreation facilities that are owned and maintained by the Garrett County Board of Education and Garrett College are an especially important part of recreation provided in Garrett County. The Board of Education owns and operates gymnasiums, playgrounds, ball fields and other facilities that are also used by residents. The new Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex at Garrett College which opened in 2011 provides community members with a fitness center, gymnasium and two swimming pools. A membership fee is required.

### **Municipally Owned**

The County's eight towns are responsible for the planning and maintenance of the parks and facilities under their ownership. The town staff also assists in their own park and recreation programs. The towns fund their parks and programs through a variety of sources. The towns can apply annually for POS funding through the County to improve, update, and enlarge the existing parks and recreation facilities. The towns or other organizations also must provide the ten-percent match that is required for POS expenditures. The County Commissioners decide which requests can be funded, based on the available funds.

### **Privately Owned**

Wisp ski resort, located in the center of the County near Deep Creek Lake, is home to a thriving winter tourism industry. This resort expanded its offerings to include all season activities such as golf, biking, a mountain coaster, ropes course and a canopy tour.

New recreation facilities have recently been added in Bloomington that are maintained by the Bloomington Fire Department. Recently, a large indoor recreation facility has been proposed in Grantsville.

Annual events such as the Grand Fondo Bicycle Race, the Deep Creek Dunk, various white water events and the Savage Man Triathlon have also become very popular in recent years.

Local organizations and athletic clubs in Garrett County fully or partially fund and maintain public or quasi-public<sup>1</sup> recreation facilities. These include, but are not limited to, the Casselman Valley Soccer Association, McHenry Lions Park, the Bloomington Fire Department, Eastern Garrett Community Association, and the Avilton Community Association. Other facilities are maintained by local community organizations and associations.

### **Trail System**

Many miles of trails have been developed under the direction of Garrett Trails, since the 2012 Recreation Plan. Garrett Trails is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to the development of a well-used network of high-quality, sustainable trails that provide access to Garrett County's historic, municipal and environmental treasures which link to trails outside the County. Most recently the group has been working on the Meadow Mountain segment of the Continental Divide Loop trail system. Trail alignment

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<sup>1</sup> Quasi-public recreation facilities include facilities that are publically owned while being managed by a non-governmental organization or privately owned facilities that allow a degree of public access.

and design have been completed and the group has tentative approval for construction of a segment of the trail.

In addition to their work on the Continental Trail Loop, they have also recently been working with the Department of Planning & Land Management and Garrett College in developing a vision of a trail network in McHenry that has its initial focus on providing a safe walking path for students from Garrett College to various points in the McHenry area including Rt. 219 up to Pysell Road. Many of these students do not have vehicles and walk to the grocery store, urgent care and many necessary places in the area. Currently no off road path is available to them, creating a dangerous situation for both pedestrians and motorists.

Other Garrett Trails Projects being pursued include, but are not limited to: ASCI to Fork Run, Fork Run to Swallow Falls, Swallow Falls to Oakland, Connectivity of all municipal trails, Meadow Mountain to Meyersdale, PA, Jennings Rail Bed to Grantsville, Friendsville to Youghiogheny Lake, Friendsville to Sang Run, the Deep Creek Lake Lions Club Trail, Deep Creek Lake State Park (Phase II and III), and the 4H Camp to Deep Creek Lake State Park.

In general, Garrett Trails will work to promote and market the usage of trails in Garrett County as well as the tristate area. For more information about the work and mission of Garrett Trails visit [www.garretttrails.org](http://www.garretttrails.org).

### **Administration**

Neither the County nor the municipalities have dedicated parks and recreation departments. The County uses groups and organizations, along with direction from the Department of Planning and Land Management to oversee County parks and recreation. The Planning Department is responsible for organization and administration. This includes administering funding applications from local towns and organizations through Maryland Department of Natural Resource (DNR) Program Open Space (POS). This County office also serves as a form of central clearinghouse for recreation initiatives by other organizations and activities by the towns and local trail organizations. The Planning Commission and the County Commissioners provide policy support, input and guidance.

### **Challenges**

Because the County does not have a Parks & Recreation Department and no dedicated staff to attend to parks, recreation and trails related issues, the responsibilities of administration of POS applications and funds, overseeing land preservation programs, coordinating with various groups, and updating the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan are shared amongst staff in the Planning & Land Management Department. While this presents a bit of a disjointed administration, it has been successful, largely because the County does not oversee the acquisition and maintenance of the facilities. If, at any point in time, the County takes on more responsibility for parks, trails and recreation facilities, the County will need to consider investing in a full time staff person.

Looking to future needs, providing recreation to an aging population may present additional challenges and ensuring that we have trails that cater to all skill levels will partially meet that challenge. Some might feel that having  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our residents outside of municipalities, where many parks are located, would be a challenge. However, what is being missed in that assessment is the fact that the State owns 66,133 acres of recreation land and 20,950 acres of resource land for a total of 87,083 acres available to the public, which is all located outside of the municipalities. Those lands are discussed further in Chapter 3.

## **Benefits**

There are apparent environmental, economic and health benefits for Garrett County to maintain and enhance parks and recreation systems in the County. These systems provide opportunities and amenities for both residents and visitors to the area. These benefits to the County are enhanced by outdoor or natural resource based recreation, such as trail hiking, bicycling, white water rafting, boating, hunting and fishing.

Each year, visitors along with the local residents substantially contribute to the County's economy and their own health, while keeping the County in pristine condition. These active recreation and outdoor based recreation activities are vital for the health and wellbeing of the population and also to keep visitors coming back to the County. Residents and visitors seek out these amenities, working hand in hand with the County's tourism industry.

## **2. Goals and Objectives for Parks and Recreation**

### **a. General Content Information**

The types of parks provided within Garrett County include County Owned Regional Parks, School Recreation Areas, Municipal Parks, Natural Resource Areas, Private & Quasi-Public Lands, and Community Association Lands.

**County Owned Regional Parks**-The County owns some regional parks that are used for a variety of recreation activities such as field sports, walking trails, basketball, picnicking and other uses. The Casselman Valley Soccer Complex, located near Grantsville, in the northeastern portion of the County is a 15-acre complex that is managed by the Casselman Valley Soccer Association. The Eastern Garrett County Park near Finzel is managed by the Eastern Garrett County Parks Association and consists of 20 acres. The 32-acre McHenry Lions Park, located in McHenry is partly maintained by the Deep Creek Lions Club and by Garrett College for use of the softball field. Crellin Community Park (7.8 acres) consists of a softball field and other amenities and is owned and partially maintained by the County.

**School Recreation Areas** –School recreation areas consist of land and facilities owned by the Garrett County Board of Education and Garrett College. Garrett College owns and operates the new Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex (CARC), including two swimming pools, a full size competition pool, weight lifting equipment and fitness programs. The college also owns and operates a large baseball field and basketball gymnasium.

The sports stadiums at Southern High and Northern High Schools provide athletic fields for football, soccer, track and other sports activities. Both high schools have outdoor basketball and tennis courts. Indoor gymnasiums provide basketball and volleyball courts and equipment for wrestling, along with other sports. The Hickory Environmental Education Center, located on the Northern High grounds, includes a nature hall, summer camp, swimming pool, walking trails, a planetarium and other amenities. The facility at Hickory Environmental Education Center is an excellent opportunity for the school system to partner with DNR's Children in Nature program.



### *Children in Nature*

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 and promote environmental literacy. The Partnership for Children in Nature was instrumental in helping the State to update the pre K – 12 environmental literacy education program (COMAR 13A.04.017) and to pass the first Environmental Literacy Graduation Requirements (COMAR 13A.03.02.03) in the nation. Since then, the Partnership has worked diligently to support school systems as they develop and implement their local environmental literacy programs, fostering collaboration among formal and non-formal educators, helping to increase opportunities for student outdoor experiences and teacher professional development, and more. Many county parks staff across the state are working with school systems and other educators to develop ways to support the environmental literacy graduation requirement by increasing access to public lands.

The middle schools associated with both high schools also maintain their own facilities through the Board of Education. Local organizations have joint use agreements, allowing a degree of public use of sports fields, gymnasiums and other facilities, pending scheduling.

The County has eight elementary schools: Friendsville, Route 40, Crellin, Accident, Grantsville, Swan Meadow, Broad Ford and Yough Glade. Each of the schools provide playground type activities with sports fields, gyms and other facilities that may at times be available to the public. The schools are distributed evenly throughout the County, providing easy accessibility to County students and residents.

**Municipal Parks-** Municipal parks serve County residents with facilities such as trails, sports fields, tennis courts and pavilions. The eight towns in the County own and maintain various parks located within or nearby the communities. Municipal parks generally range in size from 15 to 75 acres and serve communities, citizens of the County and the general public.

The eight municipalities in the County: Grantsville, Accident, Friendsville, Oakland, Loch Lynn, Deer Park, Kitzmiller and Mt. Lake Park, all own and operate facilities, which are located within the municipalities. Amenities range widely in scale of the activities and the facilities provided. Local sporting organizations have contractual agreements that allow use of fields, gymnasiums, and other facilities pending scheduling.

The towns also have several small parks, which are typically one acre or less, generally located within a neighborhood or a town center district. These parks supplement the larger, active-recreation parks.

The Town of Oakland also owns and maintains Broadford Lake. The lake property totals 400 acres, part of which is located in the town of Mt. Lake Park. The lake is used as a public water supply and is also available for swimming, boating and fishing. Broadford Park and Recreation area also has field sports, volleyball courts and running trails.

Piney Reservoir, located in the northeastern portion of Garrett County, is a large public water source for neighboring Allegany County. The lake is open to the public for fishing but not boating. The 1,371 acre reservoir and surrounding protected property is owned and maintained by the City of Frostburg. Hiking and picnicking are permitted at the site.

**Natural Resource Areas-** Natural resource areas largely consist of State owned land. Maryland State Forests and State Parks account for 89,209 acres. This undeveloped, protected land is used for hunting, trails, birdwatching, camping and other recreational activities. This land provides recreational opportunities in the County that are secondary to the preservation of the existing natural resources.

Federal lands owned by the USA associated with flood control dams such Jennings Randolph Lake (1,943 acres) and Youghiogheny Lake (1,189 acres) account for large areas of land that are preserved as natural resource areas. Much of the land not flooded is forested and managed by the federal government. Restroom facilities and boat ramps are provided. Camping is available in the state parks. Fishing and boating is popular on both of the federal owned lakes.

According to the tax records, these areas combined make up approximately 93,712 acres, which accounts for 22 percent of the County's total land area.

**Private, Quasi-Public Lands and Community Associations-** Private, quasi-public lands account for approximately 2,400 acres of recreational land in Garrett County. These special use areas have a range of specialized recreational facilities. A large number of the special use areas in the County are under private ownership and include campgrounds, golf courses, Wisp Resort, and the Oakland Country Club. Mountain Lake Park Tennis Club, Bloomington Town Park and the Western Maryland 4-H Education Center are also special use areas.

There are numerous privately owned marine oriented facilities, including private boat marinas, offering personal watercraft, boat rentals, dock slips, and ramp access. The Wisp ski resort and the ASCI whitewater course are two private facilities that have a regional, and even a national, recreational appeal.

A community center has been established in Avilton and a new town park in Bloomington, under private ownership, by virtue of a Joint-Use Agreement with the County and DNR. The Swanton Community Center owns and operates the community center located in the unincorporated town of Swanton. Bloomington has a neighborhood park that is maintained by the Bloomington Volunteer Fire Department.

Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI) and Fork Run Recreation Area are two special use areas that have a unique relationship. ASCI was originally built in conjunction with the Adventure Sports Institute at Garrett College, which offers an Associate's degree in adventure sports. ASCI is a non-profit center with a man-made, recirculating whitewater course that is open to the public. The course is host to championship level canoe and kayak competitions. Additionally, ASCI and the general public has access to the 550-acre, County owned Fork Run Recreation Area. This forested area is used for rock climbing, hiking and mountain biking. Nine and one-half miles of single track mountain bike trail have been constructed on the site, as of this Plan.

Due to the visitor-oriented nature of the County, there are many privately owned camping facilities and several golf courses. The County currently has only one privately owned bowling alley, which is located near Oakland, though a new facility is planned near McHenry in the near future.

The County updated its inventory of recreation and open space land and facilities for this Plan. This detailed inventory table of park and recreation sites, including acreage and facilities at each site, is found in Appendix D. The Parks and Recreation Map found in Appendix A shows the location of each site. The table on page 9 provide a breakdown summary of this land by owner.

#### **b. County Goals:**

The services, roles and benefits provided by public parks are vital to the County. The provision of public parks and recreational facilities are an important part of the community and an important attraction for the entire area.

The County's goals, objectives, and policies for public recreation and parks for 2012 were general and able to be carried over to this edition of the plan. The County has made great strides to reach the goals established in the 2012 LPPRP for parks and recreation and to be consistent with the 2008 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan's overall goals and objectives for Community Facilities. They are:

- a. **Provide a wide range of recreation areas and facilities that is well-distributed to serve the needs of residents and visitors, and that takes into account future residential growth patterns.**

**Progress to date:** Between the municipal parks, state lands and handful of county-owned, privately maintained facilities, the County continues to offer a plethora of opportunity. The County has supported requests for new trails and facilities at new locations, like the dog park in McHenry, Fork Run trail system, and others.

**Progress to be made:** The County is beginning the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. Parks and recreation will be part of discussions, specifically to marry the insight of planning for growth in appropriate locations with available facilities.

- b. **Work cooperatively with the County's incorporated towns to provide parks and recreation facilities.**

**Progress to date:** The County's municipalities rely heavily on Program Open Space (POS) funding as well as Community Parks and Playgrounds funding. The County has continued to funnel the available POS funding to the existing facilities along with supporting new sites that have been developed. Usually the yearly grant amount is enough to help fund the existing parks by replacing obsolete equipment and dated construction. Handicap access has been added in many areas and modern amenities added where possible, as funds permit. In addition, the County has instituted a process to aid the towns create a 5 Year Plans for Parks and Recreation that we hope will become a regular part of our annual conversations.

**Progress to be made:** The towns are short-staffed and rarely have the opportunity to conduct long range planning or adequately inspect their facilities. If the County decides to make Parks and Recreation a more established part of the processes within the Planning and Land Management Department, they might consider establishing a process to assist the towns with those needs.

- c. **Use public schools as focal points for community recreation, in addition to education. Maximize use of school facilities when they are not needed for school activities.**

**Progress to date:** The Garrett County Board of Education participates in the POS program and uses available funds to maintain their facilities that are open to the public. They have effectively scheduled the use of their facilities with local organizations and sports teams to ensure maximum utilization.

**Progress to be made:** If the County chooses to expand the Parks and Recreation duties of the Department, more accurate usage reporting should be conducted and tracked.

**d. Support community and non-profit organizations to provide recreation programming for persons of all ages.**

**Progress to date:** Through the POS programs, improvements to community organizations such as the Deep Creek Lions club, AYSO youth soccer league, MSA soccer league, HART for Animals, the Avilton Community Center, and many more organizations not associated with municipalities, the Board of Education, the county or the state, have been able to offer new services as well as maintain existing ones.

**Progress to be made:** If the County chooses to expand the Parks and Recreation duties of the Department, more accurate usage reporting should be conducted and tracked.

**e. Cooperatively work with state and federal agencies and through private-public partnerships to expand recreational offerings that promote year-round tourism.**

**Progress to date:** One significant happening in the recent past is the establishment of an Administrative Council composed of liaisons within the County, MDE and DNR specifically for the implementation of a Watershed Management Plan written for the Deep Creek watershed. The plan largely focuses on environmental stewardship but also contains elements relating to recreation. The establishment of this partnership is a model to be used in other watersheds and fosters of spirit of transparency and open communication with regards to projects, incentive programs and educational opportunities, not only between the agencies but also between the agencies and the public.

**Progress to be made:** While progress is being made and needs to continue in cooperative work with state and federal agencies, the work with private-public partnerships has not been fully investigated and its potential remains untapped.

**f. Develop an inter-connected Countywide trails network to serve different uses including, but not limited to, walking, hiking, bicycling, skiing, snowmobiling, off-road vehicles, and horseback riding.**

**Progress to date:** Garrett Trails has made great strides at inter-connecting existing trail networks with the end goal of having a trail network that covers most of the county and in parts can include a water trail (see all references to the Eastern Continental Divide Loop). Most notably, much work has been completed on the Meadow Mountain section which will eventually connect the Deep Creek State Park in the middle of the county with the town of Grantsville in the northern end of the county.

**Progress to be made:** Garrett Trails is sensitive to the need for a variety of trails serving the purposes of a diverse set of customers. However, according to the survey conducted (results reviewed later in this chapter), the public feels that more trails are needed for horseback riding, snowmobiling and off-road vehicles. In addition the County should continue to support efforts to finish the Eastern Continental Divide Loop.

The State's goals for recreation, parks, and open space are shown below. They are compatible with, and provide guidance to, the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County's objectives and policies

complement and are consistent with the state's goals. They place a strong emphasis on recreation that supports year-round tourism.

*State Goals for Parks and Recreation*

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all 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 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.

The County goals generally complement the statewide goals. Also, the implementation of County goals complement and enact the state wide goals. State and local goals differ, in that Garrett County does not necessarily need to protect recreational open space and resource lands at the same rate that is proposed at a state wide level, due to the County's rural nature, low population, lack of development pressure and the large percentage of state and government owned land.

### **3. Implementing Programs**

This section describes the framework in which Garrett County plans, acquires, develops, funds and operates parks and recreation facilities and open space. State funding sources include Program Open Space, Rural Legacy, Land and Water Conservation Fund and Community Parks and Playgrounds Program (CPPP). All of these programs are administered by DNR. The CPPP remains an important source of park and recreation funding for the County.

The County's FY 2016 operating budget for municipal parks and recreation is \$26,000. The operating budget is distributed between municipal parks, Program Open Space projects, the Historical Society, ASCI and the Garrett County Arts Council. Additional funding for upkeep and recreational planning is provided by the towns along with other organizations that provide recreational opportunities. Also, the municipalities acquire funding from the town's general fund, grants from POS, user fees, donations from civic organizations and private businesses and through fundraising activities. Volunteer labor from individuals and businesses also make important contribution to parks and recreation in the County.

Recreation projects in the County are funded through grants, the capital budget and by in-kind contributions. For example, the Bloomington Volunteer Fire Department purchased a former elementary school parcel in the town of Bloomington. The Department received some POS funding in recent years for a track, pavilion, and basketball court. Funding included grant money plus a ten percent match contribution from the fire department in the form of donated labor and materials from business and individuals.

POS is a very important funding source for Garrett County. This program is funded through the State's real estate transfer tax. Since 2007, the County has received an average of \$192,272 a year, through the program. See the table below for the annual POS funding amounts since 2007.

## Garrett County -Program Open Space Funding- fiscal years 2007-2016

Fiscal Year	Amount
2007	\$ 604,582
2008	\$ 509,783
2009	\$ 163,828
2010	\$ 75,783
2011	\$ -
2012	\$ -
2013	\$ 165,758
2014	\$ 164,984
2015	\$ 118,651
2016	\$ 119,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,922,724</b>
<b>Annual Average</b>	<b>\$ 192,272</b>

POS funding sources alone are usually not adequate to fully fund significant acquisitions or to develop new parks. But recent funding amounts have returned to be a significant source of steady income for the County's park and recreation plans.

The services, roles and benefits that public parks and recreational lands provide to the County are vital. The provision of public parks and recreational facilities are an important part of the community and a significant attraction for the entire Western Maryland area.

### 4. Inventory of Existing Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

An updated inventory of the existing County Public Parks and Recreation Facilities is included in the attached spreadsheet labeled Appendix D. This inventory has been updated from the 2012 LPPRP. A GIS-based map of the parks and recreation lands and facilities is included as Appendix A along with a proximity analysis for the available parks and recreation lands. There have been only minor additions to the recreation land and facilities since the 2012 LPPRP, including the addition of a dog park that is still under construction in McHenry and new tennis courts at Southern High School. Funding that was received in 2013 through 2016 was used to upgrade the existing parks, school facilities and sports fields.

**Park and recreation properties owned by the County-** These parks include the McHenry Lions Park, Eastern Garrett Park, Crellin softball field and the Casselman Valley Soccer Association soccer fields. These parks are owned by the County but are managed by others. For example the Eastern Garrett Park in Finzel is maintained by the Eastern Garrett Parks and Recreation Association. Similar groups manage the other County owned properties.

**School Recreation Areas-** These parks comprise land and facilities owned by the Garrett County Board of Education, the University of Maryland and Garrett College. Local sporting organizations have joint use agreements allowing a degree of public use of fields, gymnasiums, and other facilities, pending scheduling. The facilities are located within the municipalities, except for the Garrett College facilities, located in McHenry and the University of Maryland 4-H Center near Bittinger.

The University of Maryland owns and operates the Pleasant Valley 4-H Center. This 1,308 acre center includes a lake and beach area that is opened daily in the summer, offering swimming, fishing, canoeing and other activities.

Garrett College owns and operates the new Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex (CARC), featuring a warm water pool, full size competition pool, weight lifting equipment and fitness programs.

Membership to CARC is offered to all residents of Garrett County as well as visitors from outside the County.

Most of the County Board of Education outdoor facilities have basketball courts and sports fields and many include other amenities such as tennis courts, playgrounds and pavilions.

**Park and recreation properties owned by the municipalities**-The towns manage numerous parks in the municipalities of Accident, Friendsville, Deer Park, Mt. Lake Park, Loch Lynn, Oakland, Grantsville and Kitzmiller. These parks provide a variety of sports fields, playgrounds, picnicking facilities, fishing opportunities, walking or hiking paths and other amenities.

The largest municipal park is Broadford Lake Recreation Area. This is a family oriented park owned by the Town of Oakland. This regional park and has 400 acres of water and land and offers a lake, picnic and beach areas, volleyball, basketball, softball, boat launch, trails, boating and pavilion rentals.

The smaller municipal parks offer basketball or other court sports with pavilions and playground equipment that vary greatly in size and scale. Most rely heavily on POS funds and maintenance by the town.

**Properties Owned by the State of Maryland or Federal Government and Natural Resource Areas**-Natural resource areas are parks that have important natural, historical, cultural or recreational resources. In most cases, providing recreational opportunities such as trails is secondary to the preservation of the existing natural resources.

The Youghiogheny and Jennings Randolph Lakes are two large flood control dams in the County that are controlled by the federal government. These properties are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers and provide recreational opportunities for swimming, boating, hunting and fishing. The associated property around the lakes provide recreational land for camping, hiking and other related activities.

State and Federal recreation lands and water in Garrett County total over 92,000 acres made up of over 69,000 acres of recreation land and water and nearly 23,000 acres of natural resource land, as shown in the table on page 9. Approximately 6,000 of the 92,000 acres are made up of surface water in Deep Creek Lake, Youghiogheny River Lake, Jennings Randolph Lake, Savage River Reservoir, and Herrington Manor Lake.

The majority of Garrett County's public water access sites are located on local or state facilities. There are 11 public water access facilities in Garrett County. Of these sites, 9 have boat ramps for motorized access and all of them provide some access for non-motorized vessels. Since some of the water bodies are used for public water supply, some allow fishing but not boating.

Deep Creek Lake State Park is the largest of the six State-owned recreational parks in Garrett County and is estimated to draw 27,000 visitors per day on a summer weekend<sup>2</sup>. This study is dated, and has not been repeated. However, the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce conducts research to determine the number of visitors to the Deep Creek Lake area on a regular basis. Their most recent research indicates that 1.2 million visitors frequent Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County every year. The other State Parks are Big Run, Casselman River Bridge, Herrington Manor, New Germany and Swallow Falls. The State also manages numerous natural resource areas, allowing various levels of recreational activity. Savage

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Deep Creek Lake Boating and Commercial Use Carrying Capacity Study (2004) Environmental Resource Management, Annapolis, Maryland.

River State Forest, Potomac State Forest, and Garrett State Forest are the three largest State owned natural resource areas and are popular for camping, hiking, hunting, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, bird watching, and other activities.

Within the State owned lands are the State designated Wildlands. The Wildlands are natural areas preserved for their wilderness character or sensitive natural resources. Although activities like hiking, hunting and bird watching are allowed in Wildlands, restrictions on improvements for trails and visitor access limit the availability of the land for many potential users. The area is still available for hiking, hunting and birdwatching, for those who have a means of access to these areas. Wildlands are open to foot traffic only, with no maintained trails or camping permitted. This designation limits certain types of recreation by prohibiting trails, camping, biking and other forms of active recreation on this portion of the State Forest property. The designation also prohibits timbering activities and roads for access.

According to the DNR Owned Lands Acreage report, the County had six designated Wildland areas totaling 11,135 acres, in 2013. Four additional areas totaling 3,063 acres were added in 2014; Upper White Rock Run, Backbone Mountain, Maple Lick and Puzzley Run. Also, four of the Wildland areas were expanded in 2014, for a total expansion of 4,774 acres between 2013 and 2016. This brings the total to 15,909 acres of Wildlands in the County, as shown on the chart below.

Wildland Name	Location	2013 Acres	2016 Acres
Upper White Rock Run	Garrett State Forest	N/A	300
Backbone Mountain	Potomac State Forest	N/A	1,706
Maple Lick	Potomac State Forest	N/A	600
Puzzley Run	Savage River State Forest	N/A	457
Bear Pen	Savage River State Forest	1,517	1,517
Big Savage Mountain	Savage River State Forest	2,691	2,879
High Rock	Savage River State Forest	650	650
Middle Fork	Savage River State Forest	1,916	2,932
Savage Ravines	Savage River State Forest	2,427	2,789
South Savage	Savage River State Forest	1,934	2,079
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>11,135</b>	<b>15,909</b>

**Quasi-public and/or privately owned recreational facilities or park lands that are open or available for regular public use:**

Private/quasi-public lands account for 1,232 acres of recreational land in Garrett County. Due to the visitor-oriented nature of the County, there are many privately owned camping facilities, marinas, golf courses and other facilities that are available to the public. The numerous privately owned marine oriented facilities, including private speed boat marinas offering personal watercraft, boat rentals, dock slips and ramp access. The Wisp ski resort and the Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI) are two private facilities that have a regional and even a national recreational appeal.

These quasi-public and/or privately owned recreational facilities or park lands are open or available for regular public use. These special use areas include a range of facilities. Fifteen of the special use areas in



the County are under private ownership and include campgrounds, golf courses, Wisp Resort, and the Oakland Country Club.

ASCI and Fork Run Recreation Area are two special use areas that have a unique relationship. ASCI was originally built in conjunction with the Adventure Sports Institute at Garrett College, which offers an Associate's degree in adventure sports. The ASCI is a non-profit center with a man-made, recirculating whitewater course. The course hosts championship level canoe and kayak competitions. Additionally, ASCI and the general public has access to the 550-acre, County owned Fork Run Recreation Area. This forested area is used for rock climbing, hiking and mountain biking. The County currently has financial ties to the property. To date approximately ten miles of single track mountain bike trail have been constructed on the site, with plans to add more trails.

Additionally, community centers were established in Avilton and Swanton, under private ownership, by virtue of a Joint-Use Agreement with the County and DNR. The centers are owned and maintained by the community associations and have received POS funds. Also, the Deep Creek Lions club recently entered into an agreement with the County to install a heritage based trail system on County owned land along Bumble Bee Road near the McHenry Lions park.

The County updated its inventory of recreation and open space land and facilities for the LPPRP. This detailed inventory includes a table of park and recreation sites, acreage and facilities at each site is presented in Appendix D. The Parks Inventory Map in Appendix A shows the location of each site. Proximity analysis has been devised to show the availability of the facilities to all locations within the County.

## **5. Measuring User Demand**

### *Public Engagement*

In assessing user need and demand, the County produced a web based survey, which was released to the public via a press release dated January 12, 2016. The survey was found on-line, available by request via email and also in print form from the Department of Planning & Land Management. The County also worked in partnership with local organizations by asking them to utilize their email lists to solicit members to participate in the survey. The purpose of the survey was to allow citizens to identify deficiencies and opportunities in the level of service provided by existing parks and recreational facilities in the County. The survey was made available until March 11, 2016, approximately a 2 month period. In addition, approximately 2 weeks prior to the deadline, an additional reminder was sent out to remind anyone who had not submitted a survey to do so.

The survey provided both a pull down menu for multiple choice answers and essay type questions. It included the following questions:

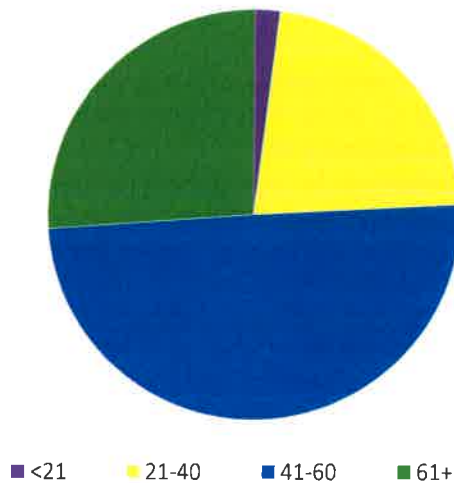
- Name
- Email
- May we contact you regarding your response to this survey?
- What is your age?
- What is your gender?
- Do you have young children living in your home?
- Are you a Garrett County resident?

- What is your zip code?
- How important is health and fitness to your choice of recreational activity?
- What types of recreation do you regularly participate in (check all that apply)?
- What other types of recreation do you regularly participate in that are not listed?
- What parks in Garrett County do you regularly visit (check all that apply)?
- What other parks do you frequent that are not listed?
- How often do you visit any of these parks in the County?
- How satisfied are you with the availability of recreational opportunities close to you in Garrett County?
- How satisfied are you with the number of parks available for your use within the County?
- Which types of recreational equipment are most important to you (and your family) and your style of recreation (check up to 3)?
- What other types of recreational equipment or facilities (not listed) are important to you?
- What facilities do you recommend adding to existing parks in the County?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?
- May we contact you regarding your response to this survey?

### *Survey Results*

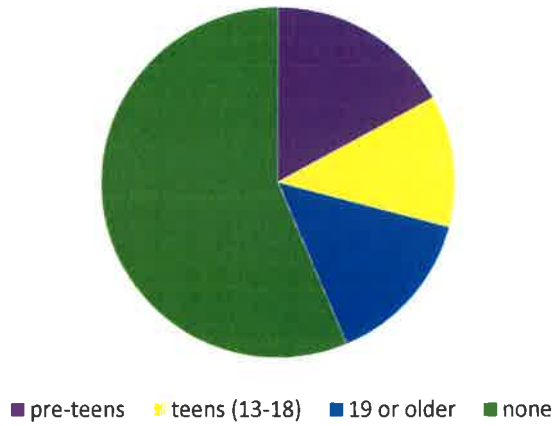
The survey garnered 155 respondents. The demographics of the survey respondents were somewhat diverse, with 53% being male and 46% being female. The largest proportion of the respondents (50%) were between the ages of 41 and 60. The next largest age group were over 60 at 26%, followed closely by the 21 – 40 year olds at 22%. Only 2% of the respondents were under 21. To reach that demographic in the future we will need to consider working with the school system.

Age of Survey Participants



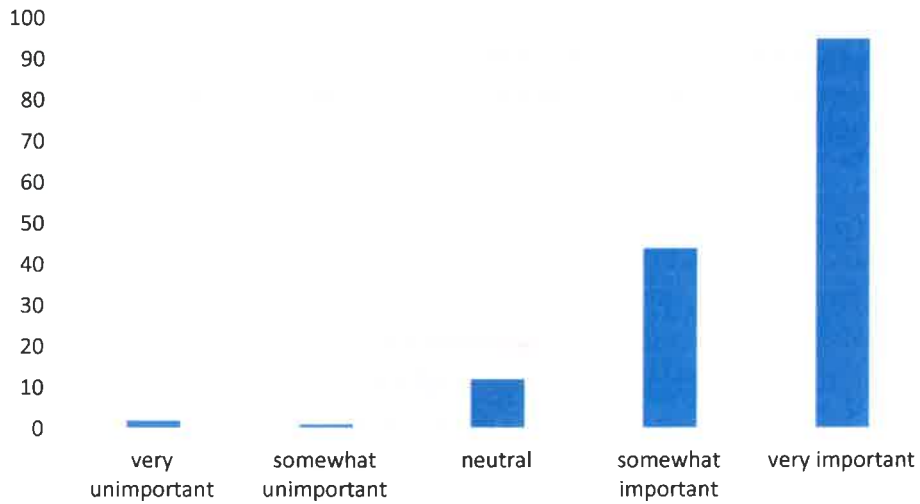
Most of the respondents (56%) did not have any young children living at home. 17% had pre-teens living at home, 12% had teens between the ages of 13 and 18 living at home, and 15% had children ages 19 or older living at home.

### Do you have young children living in your home?



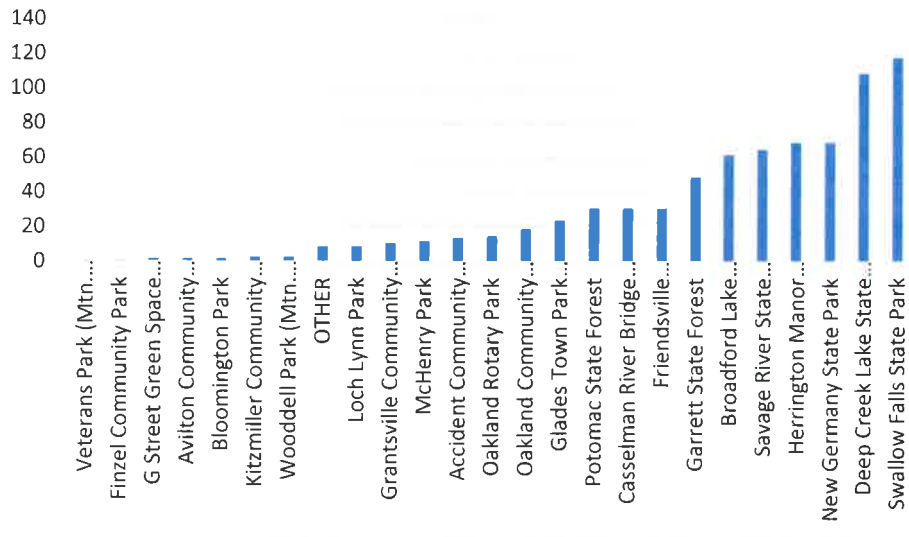
Most respondents placed great value on health and fitness in their lives.

### Importance of Health & Fitness



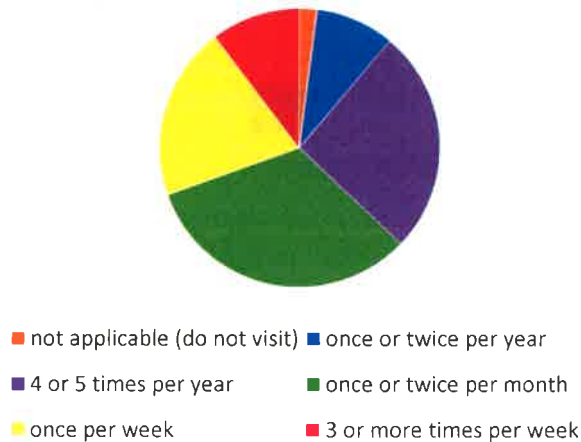
Of all the parks in the County, the respondents visited the state parks most regularly, with on average the state parks being visited twice as regularly as municipal parks.

### What Parks in Garrett County do you regularly visit?



The frequency with which the respondents visited these parks was generally once or twice a month (32%) or 4 or 5 times per year (26%). 20% of the respondents visited these sites once per week, while 10% visit 3 or more times per week, and 9% visit once or twice per year.

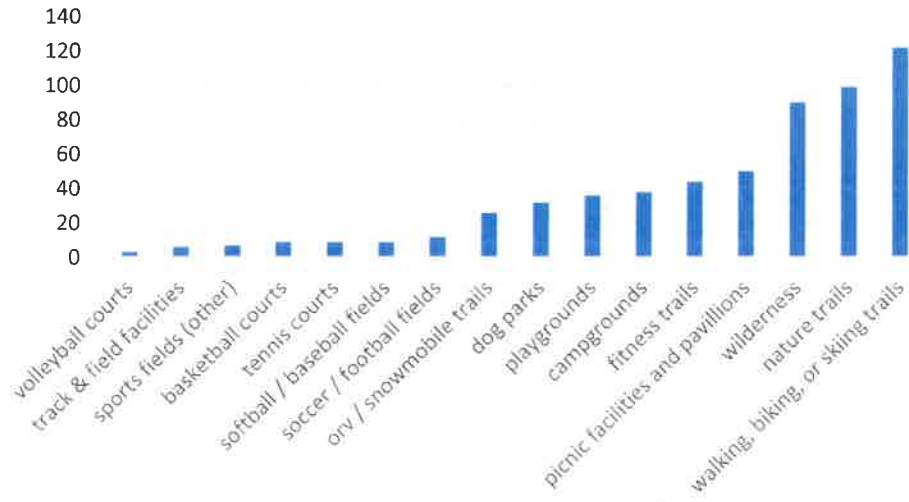
### How often do you visit (parks from previous question)?



In general, the types of recreational facilities preferred can be broken into three groupings, with the most popular being the wilderness experience, nature trails and walking, biking or skiing trails. The second grouping includes ORV/Snowmobile trails, dog parks, playgrounds, campgrounds, fitness trails and

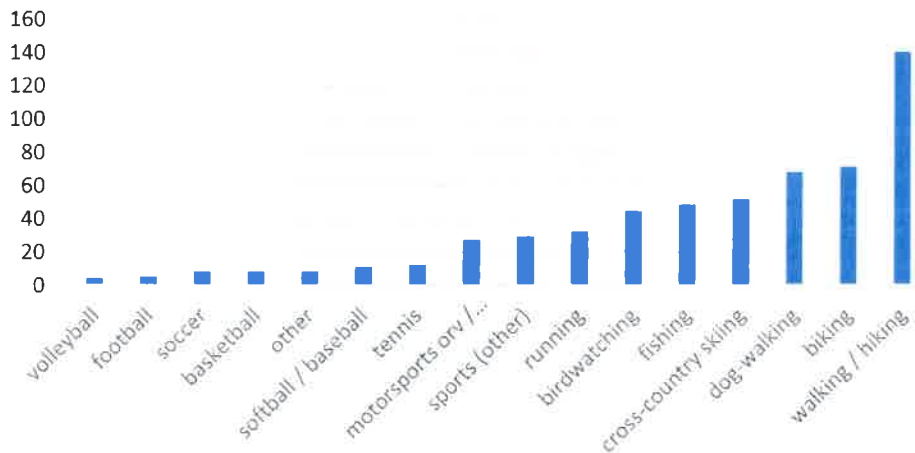
picnic facilities and pavilions. The third grouping are the sports facilities including soccer/football fields, softball/baseball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, sports fields, track & field facilities and volleyball courts.

### What recreational facilities are important to you?

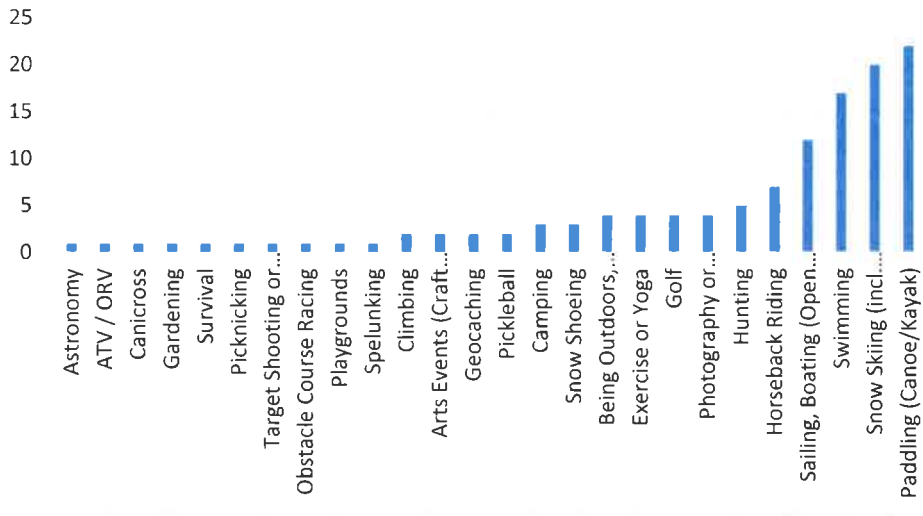


The most popular recreational activity our respondents participate in is walking and hiking (140 participating respondents). The next most popular are biking (71), dog-walking (68), cross-country skiing (51), fishing (48), birdwatching (44), running (32), other types of sports (29), motorsports (27), paddling (22) and snow skiing (20). All activities are depicted on the next TWO charts, with number of respondents being depicted on the vertical axis.

### What types of recreation do you regularly participate in?

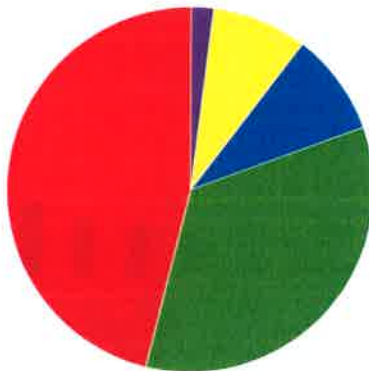


### Other types of Recreation



When asked how satisfied they were with the availability of recreational opportunities close to them in Garrett County, most respondents reported being very satisfied (46%). 34% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied, 9% were neutral, 8% were somewhat dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied.

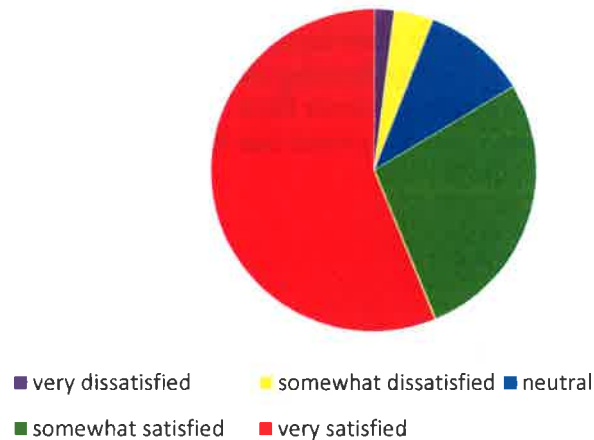
How satisfied are you with the availability of recreational opportunities close to you in Garrett County?



■ very dissatisfied 
 ■ somewhat dissatisfied 
 ■ neutral 
 ■ somewhat satisfied 
 ■ very satisfied

When asked how satisfied they were with the number of parks available, 56% were very satisfied while 27% were somewhat satisfied. 10% of the respondents were neutral on the question, 4% were somewhat dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied.

### How satisfied are you with the number of parks available to you in Garrett County?



The parts of the survey that allowed for public comment revealed concerns as well as opportunities for the future. Respondents expressed a desire for more recreational facilities and trails in McHenry, more dog parks, an outdoor weather-protected concert venue, an indoor climbing facility, restrooms at recreational sites, indoor sports venues, bike and skateboard parks, horse friendly trails and wilderness camping, shuttle service to parks and local discounts and season passes.

Responses indicated that trails were equally important to our citizens with an emphasis on the need for connections between existing trails for bike, cross country, pedestrian, ORV & snowmobiles (similar to the Hatfield & McCoy trail system), as well as good maintenance of the existing trails. In addition respondents requested more loop trails, a Youghiogheny River trail and trails that accommodate various skill levels. Some respondents also wanted more road biking opportunities.

Citizens indicated that they would like more access points to lakes and rivers for fishing, boat/kayak launch and water sports. They also emphasized their desire to ensure the sustainability of our clean waterways and maintain a non-industrialized environment. Many respondents expressed concern about the cost associated with some recreational facilities, especially those that offer swimming, and boat launch fees at Deep Creek Lake. In addition to cost, some would like to see our recreational parks and trails open year round with longer hours of operation to accommodate those who prefer to visit after work hours during the week.

The public requested more educational programs at low cost, as well as educational stations and signage along the trails. Educational signage can provide information about exercise, culture, history, or natural features. Citizens noted the need for an anti-littering campaign in addition to the need to educate the

populous about the importance of parks. In general better marketing of the parks and recreational opportunities is needed.

Whitewater was noted as being an important, but often neglected recreational industry. Citizens noted that ASCI needs to be marketed more and the natural whitewater opportunities in Friendsville should be highlighted. One respondent suggested a whitewater park be established in Friendsville. Also, the Youghiogheny River put in and take out needs updated.

Finally, many respondents focused on the need for more facilities and activities for youth. Among the suggestions were playgrounds, rollerskating/blading, bowling alleys, ice skating, family and pet friendly social gathering facilities, a better track at Southern Garrett High School, more space for youth teams and community based sports leagues & classes. They also noted that the CARC should be used for after school programs and youth clubs.

#### *Usage Data, Demand and Participation Rates*

As Garrett County does not manage these facilities, we do not track user statistics. There is no system in place to collect such data from the entities that do manage the facilities. We will look into establishing such a process in the future.

The state usage data is provided by the Maryland Park Service and is as follows:

#### **Big Run**

3,381 Day Use  
3,016 Camping

#### **Swallow Falls**

253,882 Day Use  
20,775 Camping

#### **Casselman River Bridge**

8,637 Day Use

#### **Deep Creek NRMA**

444,596 Day Use

#### **Deep Creek Lake State Park**

540,477 Day Use  
20,681 Camping  
1,219 Cabins

#### **New Germany**

14,823 Day Use  
8,478 Camping  
8,538 Cabins

#### **Herrington Manor**

87,523 Day Use  
19,696 Cabins

## **6. Level of Service Analysis**

County priorities are typically based on the needs of the various towns and population centers in the County. The results of the survey conducted should also be considered when determining priorities for future land acquisition and facility development. Since the top four recreational facilities of most importance from the survey were “walking/biking/skiing trails”, “nature trails”, “wilderness”, and “picnic facilities & pavilions”, those types of facilities should be targeted when park projects are being developed



followed by other desirable facility types such as “fitness trails”, “campgrounds”, “playgrounds”, and “dog parks”.

### *Proximity Analysis*

The County ran three different Proximity Analyses to determine where parks in the County are more or less accessible to residents. All analyses were based on a five mile buffer around parks. More details are available about the methods used in Section 6c. The first was for parks in general. The number of parks available to residents (within five miles) ranges from 0 to 35 and the highest density of parks appears to be around the Deep Creek Lake area (Figure 2-1). The area around Kempton (in the very southern end of the County) doesn't have any parks at all, but the low population and terrain would make a park in that location both unnecessary and inordinately expensive. Other alternatives for recreation are provided near that location. For example, the highest point in Maryland is nearby and though on private property is well-maintained and open to the public. Kempton is also at the southern terminus of our county and therefore very close to the West Virginia border. Just west of our border in WV is Silver Lake, while just east is Mt Storm, both used for recreational purposes. Further south is Blackwater Falls State Park.

A second analysis was done using picnic tables and pavilions. Here the range of parks available within five miles with those amenities is 0 to 11 and the highest density appears to be north of the lake near the town of Accident (Figure 2-2). Areas near Oakland and Grantsville show relatively high density as well. Some of the most important park amenities according to the respondents to the survey, were trails of various kinds. To analyze those we decided to run a third analysis on parks that included trails of any kind. The range of parks that include trails, within five miles ranged from 0 to 12 with the highest density occurring to the west of Deep Creek Lake probably drawing on the network of trails in and around Swallow Falls and Herrington Manor State Parks as well as along the Youghioghney River (Figure 2-3). The Glades Town Park and Oakland Rotary Park also contribute to the density in the 10-12 park zone. It appears from the map that creating more trails could benefit residents in the northern and eastern parts of the County such as Finzel, Grantsville, Friendsville, and Kitzmiller. There are trails in those areas but not as many as in other parts of the County.

Figure 2-1

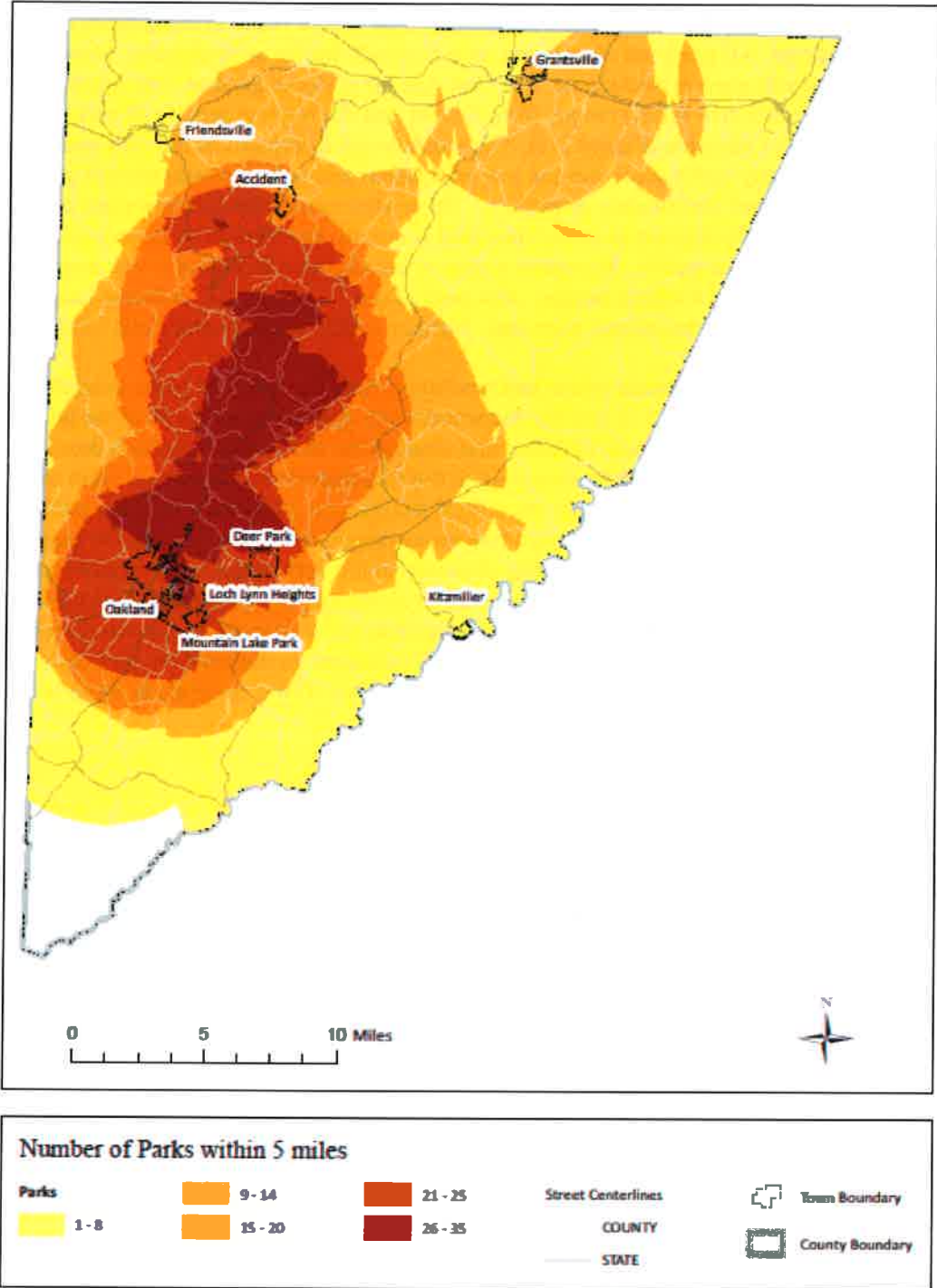


Figure 2-2

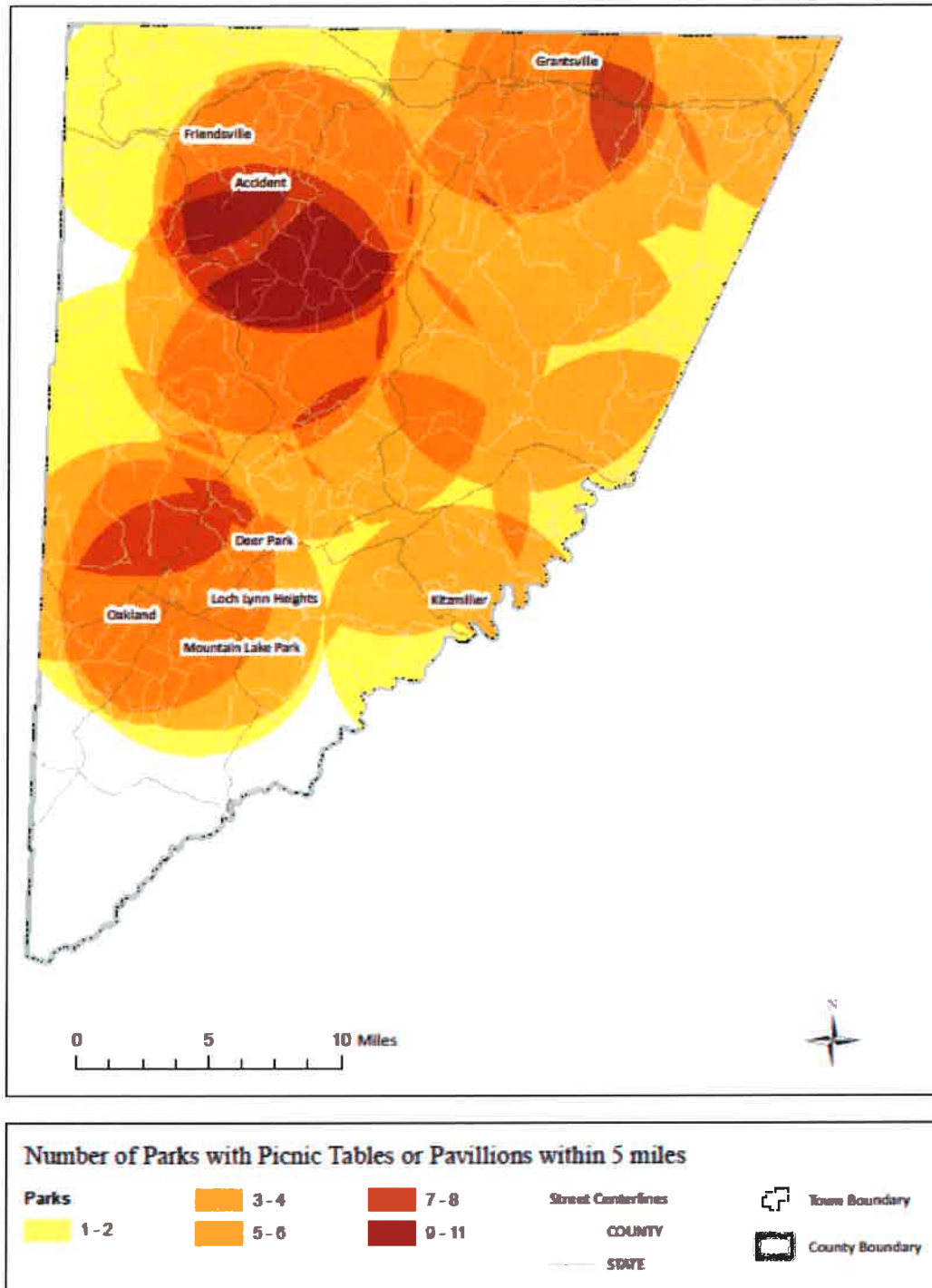
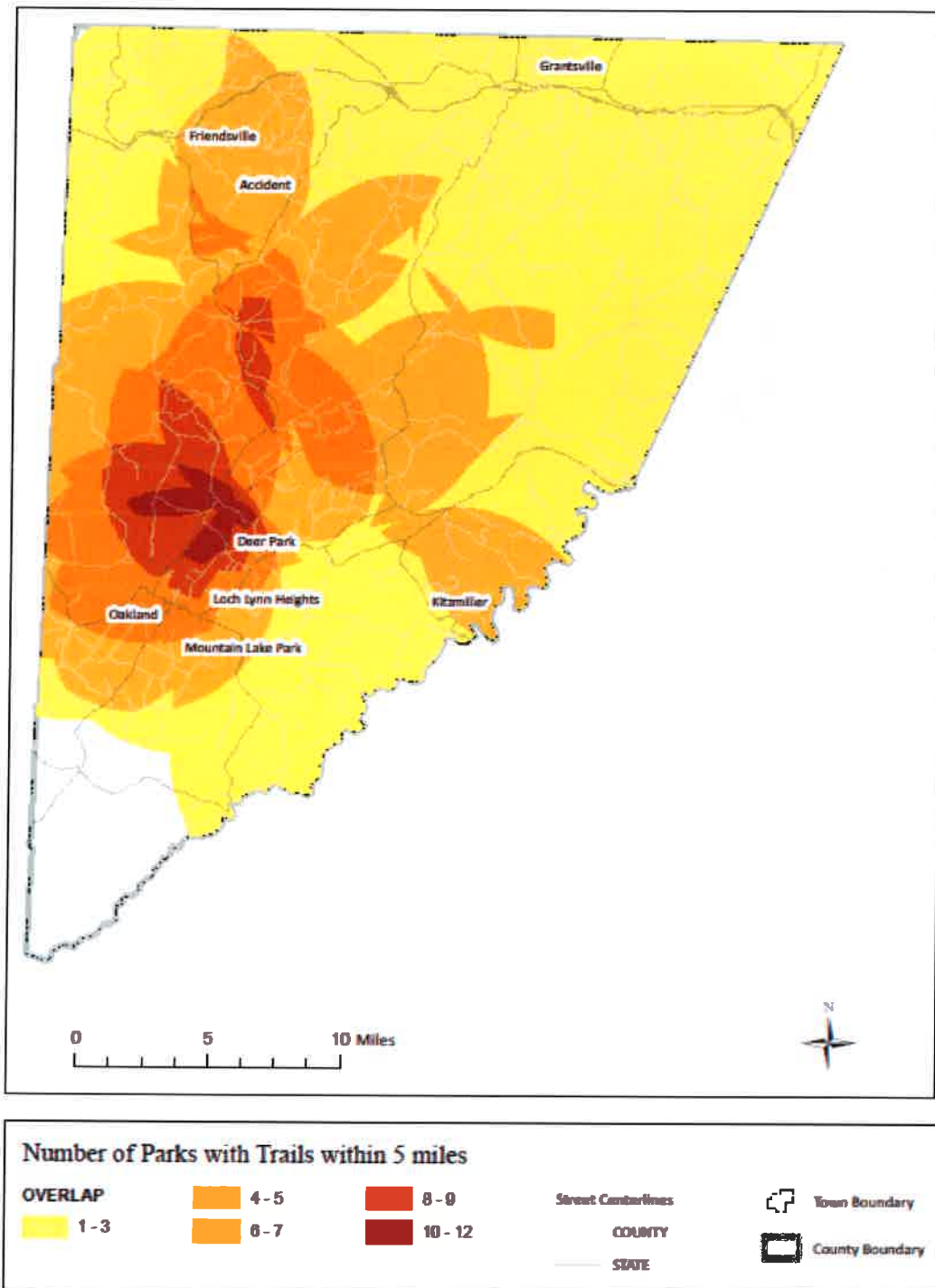


Figure 2-3



## *Methods used in Proximity Analysis*

The analysis used the County's site inventory polygon layer and selected parks of interest by amenity types. A subset layer was created based on these selections. Next that polygon layer was buffered with a distance of five miles with no dissolve and a python script was used to export each buffered park feature as a separate ESRI format shapefile into a folder. All shapefiles were then used in a "Union" operation which creates single individual polygons for every intersected location and includes a unique FID field for every input layer (e.g. FID\_park\_1, FID\_park\_2). The different FID values contain a value of zero or more if they are represented in a given output polygon and a value of -1 if they are not represented. The overlap was counted by adding a field and adding up the "-1" values and subtracting from the total number of input parks (e.g. "0 - (-20 - ( [FID\_park\_1] + [FID\_park\_2] ... ))"). The calculation results in a positive value for the number of parks represented within five miles and can be symbolized accordingly.

## **7. Capital Improvement Plan**

Because Garrett County does not have a separate parks and recreation program with dedicated staff and because Garrett County does not manage park properties, the County has no need to set a budget for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of facilities. However, the County does work with local municipalities, groups and organizations and help facilitate their plans for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of parks and facilities. In that role, the County ensures that their plans align with those outlined in the County Comprehensive Plan with regard to community facilities, health care, transportation and economic development. The County is also sensitive to appropriate design to ensure appropriate stormwater, grading, sediment and erosion control and building regulations are met.

While the County does not create a list of projects that it will own and manage, it can list projects that it supports based on both County goals and public input. The following are the County's specific priorities with respect to parks, community facilities and trails for the next five years, as well as extended priorities.

### *Parks*

Most parks are managed by the State, municipalities or local organizations. Improvements in State parks are at the sole discretion of the State; however, the County will forward information from this survey and this Plan to the State to inform their future planning efforts.

The County will continue to work with local organizations who manage parks to ensure they are aware of funding opportunities, assist them in grant applications and administration of funds received. POS fund requests are generally greater than that allotted. The County will continue to champion for not only maintenance of those funds, but an increase when possible.

Long term the County will continue to solicit feedback from the public and share that information, so that park managers are aware of trending needs and desires of the citizenry and can plan accordingly to meet those needs.

Municipalities were contacted to ensure their short and long range planning goals with regard to municipal parks were incorporated into this Plan. The following priorities were expressed.

### *Town Park Plans*

According to information obtained from the county's municipalities, the towns plan to continue with the expansion and improvements to the parks. Some would like to acquire small adjacent parcels for a range of uses that are accessory to the recreational aspect of the parks. Short range projects include, parking,

extension of existing trails, fencing, lighting, replacement of dated equipment along with a wide range of other projects.

Specific requests from the municipalities include:

<b>Land Acquisition Projects</b>						
<b>Town</b>	<b>Project Name/Description</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Oakland	Pocket Park, Oak & 2nd St		200000			
	Pocket Park, Alder St @ Englander's					20000
	Pocket Park, 2nd St			25000		
	Pocket Park, Alder St @ Gregg's				65000	
Loch Lynn Heights	1.11 Acres, Parcel 7 or 11					50000
Grantsville	Old Maranatha Church Ballfield			XXXXX		
	SHA Parklet @ Rt 669 & Rt 40				XXXXX	
Deer Park	Deer Park Hotel Rd, 1 - 1.5 Acres			10000		

<b>New Project Planning/Development</b>						
<b>Town</b>	<b>Project Name/Description</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Oakland	Pocket Park		50000	30000	30000	10000
	Pocket Park		50000	30000	30000	15000
	Memorial Dr Health Trail, Walking/Bike Path		300000	500000	200000	
Loch Lynn Heights	Basketball Court behind Town Hall					30000
Friendsville	New Public Bathroom	70000				
	Extend Parking Lot	60000				
	Lighting in Parking Lot		70000	80000		
	Small Pavilion	25000				
	3 Kiosks		12000			
Mountain Lake Park	Crystal Springs Boardwalk		400000			

<b>New Equipment</b>						
<b>Town</b>	<b>Project Name/Description</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Oakland	Dog Park Construction	25000	15000	10000		
	Community Center Improvements		50000	25000		
	Overhead Pedestrian Walkway				200000	100000
	Broadford Amphitheater/Stage	30000	100000	75000		
	Broadford Pavilion w/restrooms				90000	

	Glades Pavilion Enclosure		40000			
	Pocket Park Playground/Parking Improvements		30000	20000	30000	
	Downtown Walkway/Gateway	50000	30000			
	Yough Waterfront Park	50000	75000			
Loch Lynn Heights	Fencing @ Dugouts	4800				
	Security Cameras @ Dugouts & Trail	8000				
	Signage on Observation Deck	2800				
	Accessory Building for Storage		7200			
	Picnic Table @ Ballfield	1800				
	Bollards around light poles	9000				
Grantsville	Pavilion					10000
	Cameras & Wifi		7000			
	Pedestrian Bridge				20000	
Deer Park	Play Equipment				182,750	
	Security Cameras		10000			
	Park & Pavilion Area		15000			
Friendsville	Picnic Tables				3000	
	Poles for Car Stops		5000			
	Lights, Lower Ballfield					150000
	Bathroom Lighting	15000				
Mountain Lake Park	Security Cameras @ Bob Damon Park	41800				

Replacement Equipment						
Town	Project Name/Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Oakland	Broadford Little League Bleachers	10000	10000	10000		
	Broadford Softball League Fencing		25000			
	Our Town Theater wall/parklet	7500	2500			
	Broadford Bathhouse Renovation		80000	50000		
	Parking Lot Improvements	75000	75000			
Loch Lynn Heights	Playground Equipment			175000		
Grantsville	Picnic Tables		5000			
	Playground Equipment		30000			
	Little League Lights		100000			
	Basketball & Volleyball Lights			50000		
Deer Park	Picnic Tables and Benches			18350		
Accident	Merry-go-round/TPE		6000			
Friendsville	Rubber Wood Chips, 30 ton	34000				

	Bleachers, 6 sets		13200			
Mountain Lake Park	Playground Equipment, Bob Damon Park	66875				

Maintenance						
Town	Project Name/Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Oakland	Glades Path Improvements			35000		
	Glades Basketball Courts Improvements	65000				
	Downtown Lighting	50000				
Loch Lynn Heights	Retaining Wall @ playground		21000			
	Gravel upgrade - walking trail		2500			
Grantsville	Little League Dugouts			5000		
Deer Park	Plastic Timbers and Mulch	28500				
Accident	Ballfield/Graded	38000				
	Mulch		5000			
Friendsville	Renovate Tennis Court	11000				

The town councils in all of the municipalities support recreational activities and strive to maintain and promote the town parks. Funding from Program Open Space plays a vital role in the improvements, maintenance and expansion of all of the municipal recreation areas in the County.

#### *Community Facilities*

Community facilities are largely run by educational institutions. Improvements at these locations are at their discretion; however, the County will forward information from this survey and this Plan to the relevant educational institutions to inform their future planning efforts.

Long term the County will encourage the proliferation of youth activities and facilities and the exploration of unique, family friendly venues.

#### *Trails*

The County will continue their productive partnership with Garrett Trails. Short term goals include the completion of Meadow Mountain Trail and the design and construction of the first phase of the McHenry trail system (Mosser Road to US219). The County will also discuss how to ensure the trails serve citizens with a variety of skill levels.

Long term goals are to plan for phase II and III of the McHenry trail system, currently envisioned as US 219/Mosser Rd intersection to points of interest north and south of the intersection. The County also strongly encourages construction of the Continental Divide Loop Continental Divide Loop with connections to the Great Allegany Passage. Ultimately a trail system that links the state parks would also be economically advantageous. Trail systems managed by municipalities, state agencies and local organizations will improve their locations at their sole discretion; however, good communication will ensure systemic improvement of the overall network for the County. The County also agrees that marketing of our recreational resources is vital and will begin discussions with the appropriate contacts.



# Chapter 3 - Natural Resource Land Conservation

## 1. Executive Summary / Overview

Garrett County has abundant natural resource lands. Of the County's total land area of approximately 419,293 acres, 377,496 acres (90%) are resource lands including 284,457 acres of forest. DNR owns 87,653 acres in Garrett County, more than in any other County. These resource lands not only contain environmentally sensitive areas but also provide scenic and recreational resources for the County's residents and visitors, and provide opportunities to connect with nature.

Due to the overwhelming amount of open space and protected land, Garrett County has no challenges providing citizens with opportunities to commune with nature. Citizens and visitors to our County can recreate in the many state, municipal or privately managed parks mentioned in the previous chapter, they can enjoy the scenery enhanced by the open space protected under various preservation and easement programs, or they can choose to learn more about our agriculture, culture and history through various agri-tourism opportunities. While existing opportunities abound, where additional opportunities may present themselves, especially in regard to education and tourism, the County will help facilitate bringing those opportunities to fruition.

## 2. Goals

Natural resource conservation lands provide many environmental and social benefits including natural filtration of air and water, outdoor recreation opportunities, economic and public health benefits, and wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Preserving natural resources sustains a functioning ecosystem, which in turn provides benefits to all humans, including but not limited to improved resilience, reduced vulnerability, improved sediment transport and better water quality.

Garrett County's Sensitive Areas Goal as stated in the Sensitive Areas chapter of the County's 2008 Comprehensive Plan is to "continue to protect Garrett County's sensitive environmental resources and natural features". The 2012 Garrett County LPPRP reiterated this goal and the following objectives for achieving the goal:

- Limit development in and near sensitive environmental areas, including steep slopes, streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplains, and the habitats of threatened or endangered species.
- Conserve agricultural and forest resource land.
- Protect scenic resources.
- Support increased use of soil and water conservation practices.
- Preserve 20,000 acres of farmland by 2020.
- Protect public wellhead resource areas.

The State goals for natural resource lands conservation preservation are as follows:

- 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:
  - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
  - Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
  - Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.

- Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands;
  - Avoidance of impacts on natural resources of publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and
  - Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.
- 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).
  - Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that 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.)
  - Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.
  - Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.
  - Assess the combined ability of State and local programs to achieve the following:
    - Expand and connect forests, farmlands, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure;
    - Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations;
    - 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;
    - Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
    - Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

*Progress to date:*

The County maintains the 2012 goals in the 2015 plan and continues to work towards them mainly through the administration of several adopted Ordinances, which are listed in total in Section 5 of this Chapter. The Sensitive Areas Ordinance helps conserve important natural features by providing regulations regarding steep slopes; stream buffers; wetlands; floodplains; source water protection areas and habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species. Garrett County's Floodplain Management Ordinance, Stormwater Management Ordinance, and Sediment & Erosion Control Ordinance also help to protect important natural resources and provide for increased use of soil and water conservation practices. Conservation of agricultural land and protection of farmland are discussed in the next chapter.

County goals mostly complement the State Goals. An example of cooperation towards achieving these shared goals is evidenced by the County and DNR partnering to develop a comprehensive watershed management plan for Deep Creek Lake. Completed in 2014, The Deep Creek Watershed Management Plan will serve as a comprehensive, best practices guide to protect the lake's sensitive natural resources and address water quality and recreational activities. One of the goals of the Plan was to "manage stormwater infrastructure to decrease pollution from both existing and proposed development to ensure healthy watershed conditions". To help achieve this goal, the County completed a stormwater assessment of the North Glade Watershed that identified locations of excessive erosion, their sources and

recommended solutions for remediation. The intent of the County is to obtain a model for assessment that can be repeated in other subwatersheds in the future.

### 3. Inventory of Protected Natural Resource Lands

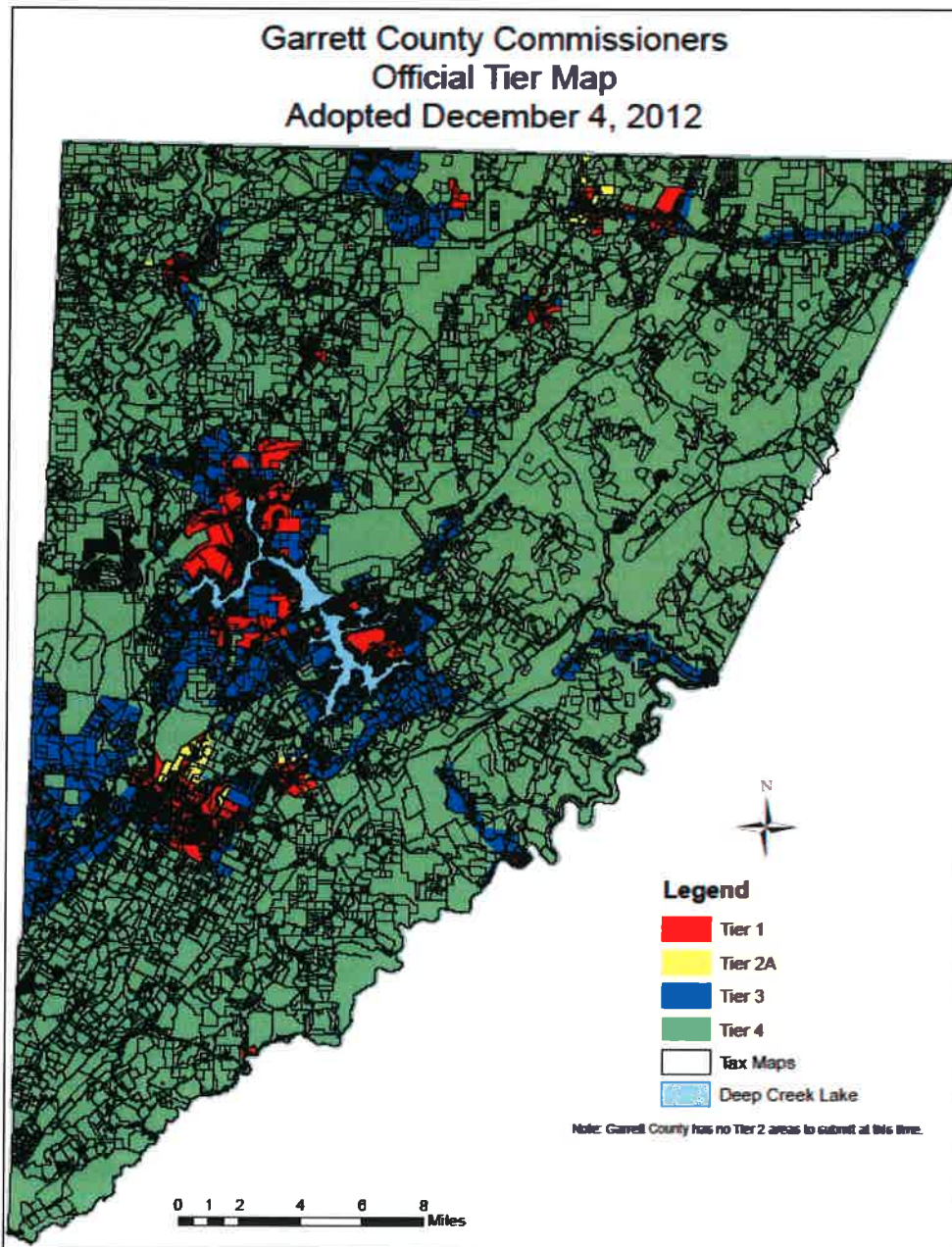
<b>Natural Resources Lands Inventory</b>		
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Federal, State, Local acres</b>	<b>Description / Outdoor Recreation Amenities</b>
Backbone Mountain Wildland (Potomac SF)	1,706	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Bear Creek Hatchery Fish Mgt. Area	113	Supports fishery resources
Bear Pen Wildland (Savage River SF)	1,517	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Big Savage Wildland (Savage River SF)	2,879	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Cranesville Swamp- The Nature Conservancy	1,023	Nature and birdwatching
Cunningham Swamp Wildlife Mgt. Area	257	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Finzel Swamp- The Nature Conservancy	326	Nature and birdwatching
Fulcher Smith Conservation Area (MET)	70	Habitat protection
Grantsville Town Park	2	Passive, stormwater pond
High Rock Wildland (Savage River SF)	650	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Maple Lick Wildland (Potomac SF)	600	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Middle Fork Wildland (Savage River SF)	2,932	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area	1,854	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
North Branch Potomac Fish Mgt. Area	279	Supports fishery resources
Piney Reservoir	1,371	Fishing, nature watching
Puzzley Run Wildland (Savage River SF)	457	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Savage Ravines Wildland (Savage River SF)	2,789	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Savage River Reservoir	360	Fishing, kayaking
South Savage Wildlands (Savage River SF)	2,079	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
The Glades- The Nature Conservancy	601	Preservation -no public access
Upper White Rock Wildland (Garrett SF)	300	Hiking, nature watching, hunting
Youghiogheny Wild River NEA	4,129	Hiking, fishing, rafting & kayaking
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>26,294</b>	

## 4. Mapping

### Tier Map

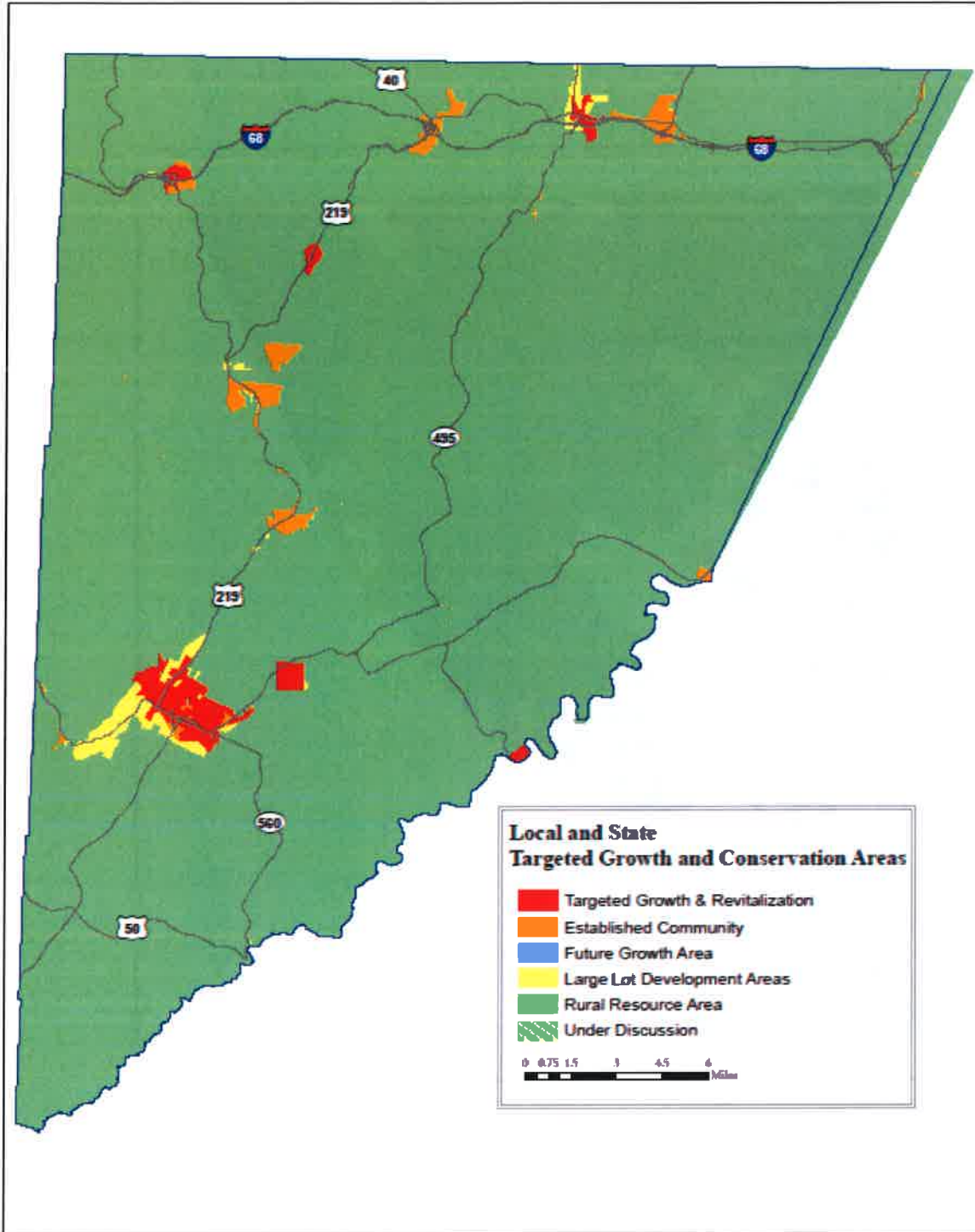
The Maryland General Assembly approved the Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (Senate Bill 236) during the 2012 General Assembly session. The law, which took effect on July 1, 2012, is sometimes referred to as the Septic Bill since it seeks to limit the spread of residential development on septic systems.

The Act required all jurisdictions, including Garrett County, to adopt land use categories called Tiers. The Tiers were created based on certain criteria in the Act that established where major and minor residential subdivisions may be located and what type of sewerage system will serve them. No major subdivision (greater than 7 lots) can be located in lands designated as Tier 4. All subdivisions submitted on or after December 31, 2012 must comply with the Tier Map and other provisions of the Act.



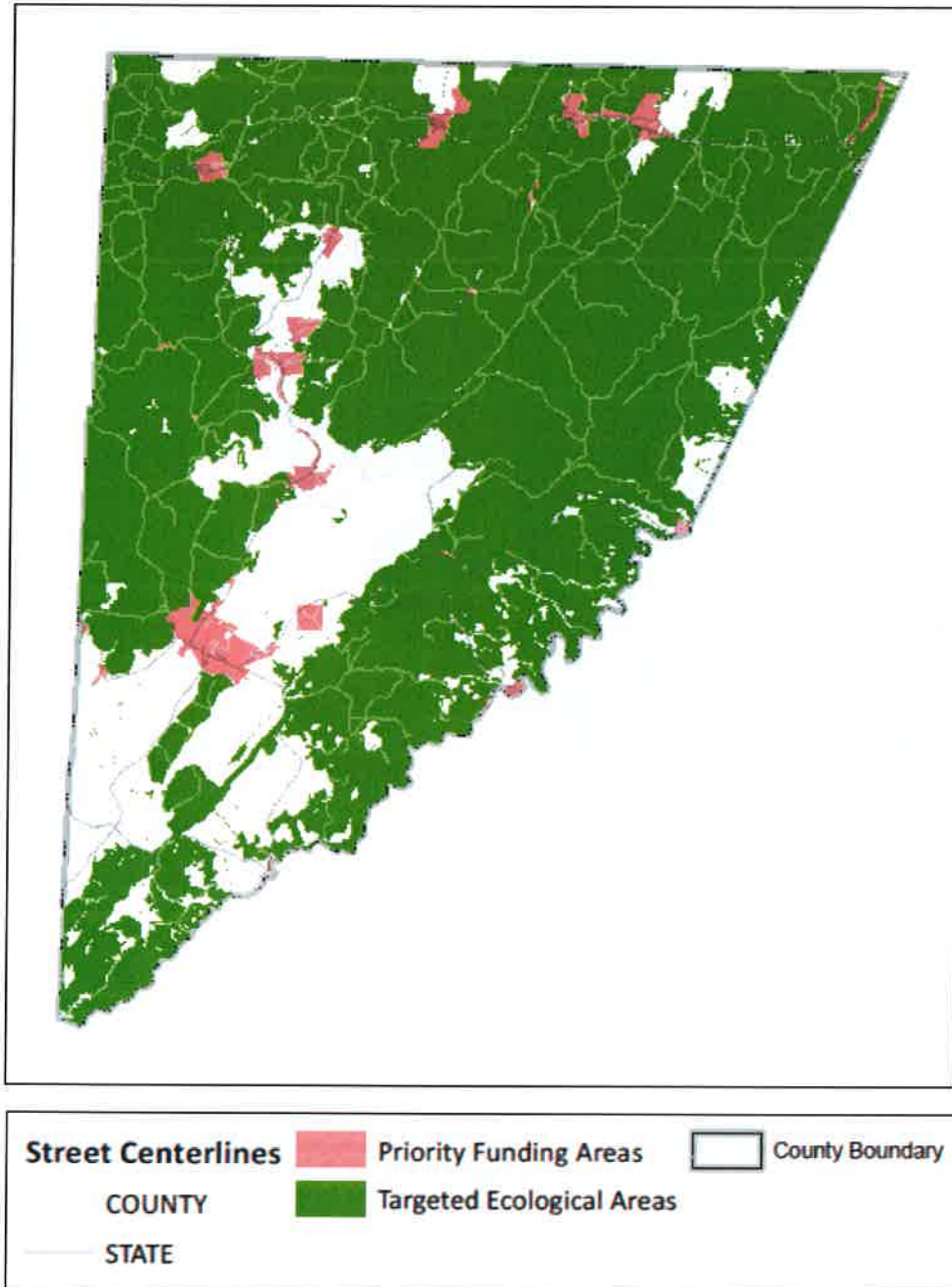
## Targeted Growth and Conservation Areas

Targeted growth and conservation areas are locations for coordinated planning, management and resource allocation. The purpose of these areas is to identify where and how local and state government, as well as the private sector, can work together to achieve common goals.

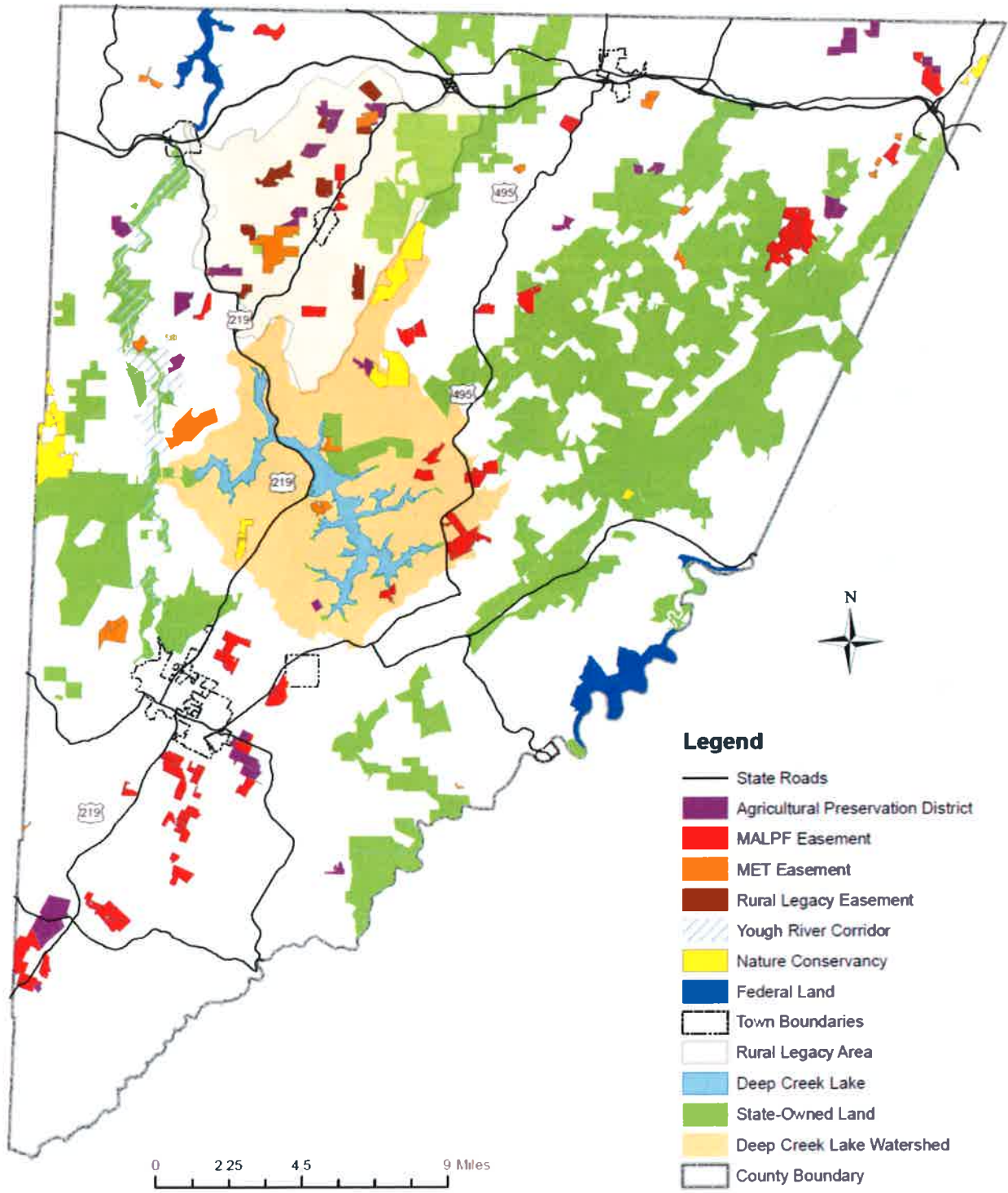


## Priority Funding and Targeted Ecological Areas

1997 Planning Legislation capitalizes on the state's influence on economic growth and development. This law directs state spending to Priority Funding Areas (PFA). Priority Funding Areas are existing communities and places designated by local governments that states where want state investment to support future growth. Targeted Ecological Areas are a limited number of areas that rank exceptionally high for ecological criteria and that have a practical potential for preservation. The criteria for PFAs are set by the MD Department of Planning, while the criteria for targeted ecological areas is set by the MD Department of Natural Resources.

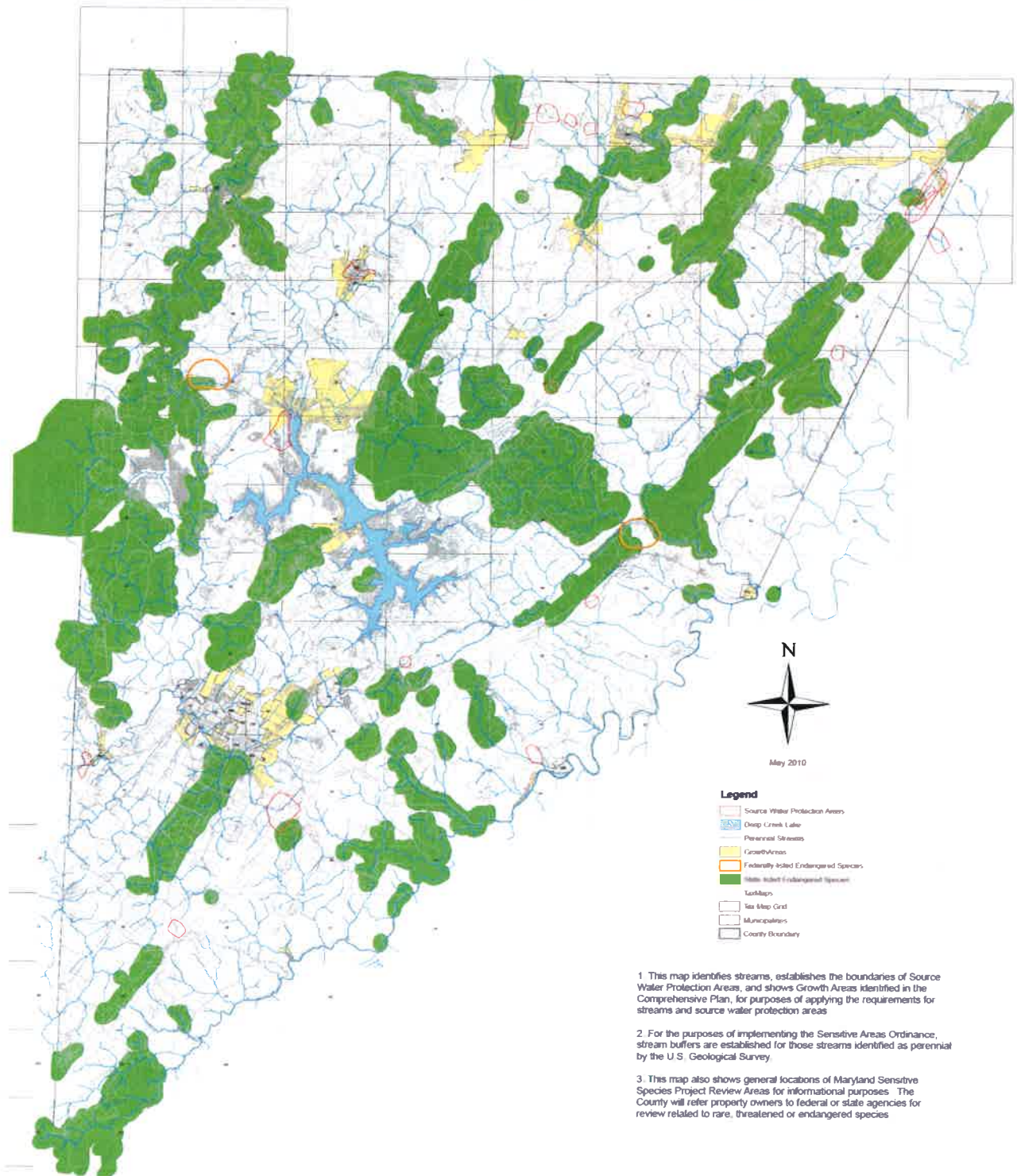


# Garrett County Maryland Protected Lands



# Sensitive Areas; Map 1

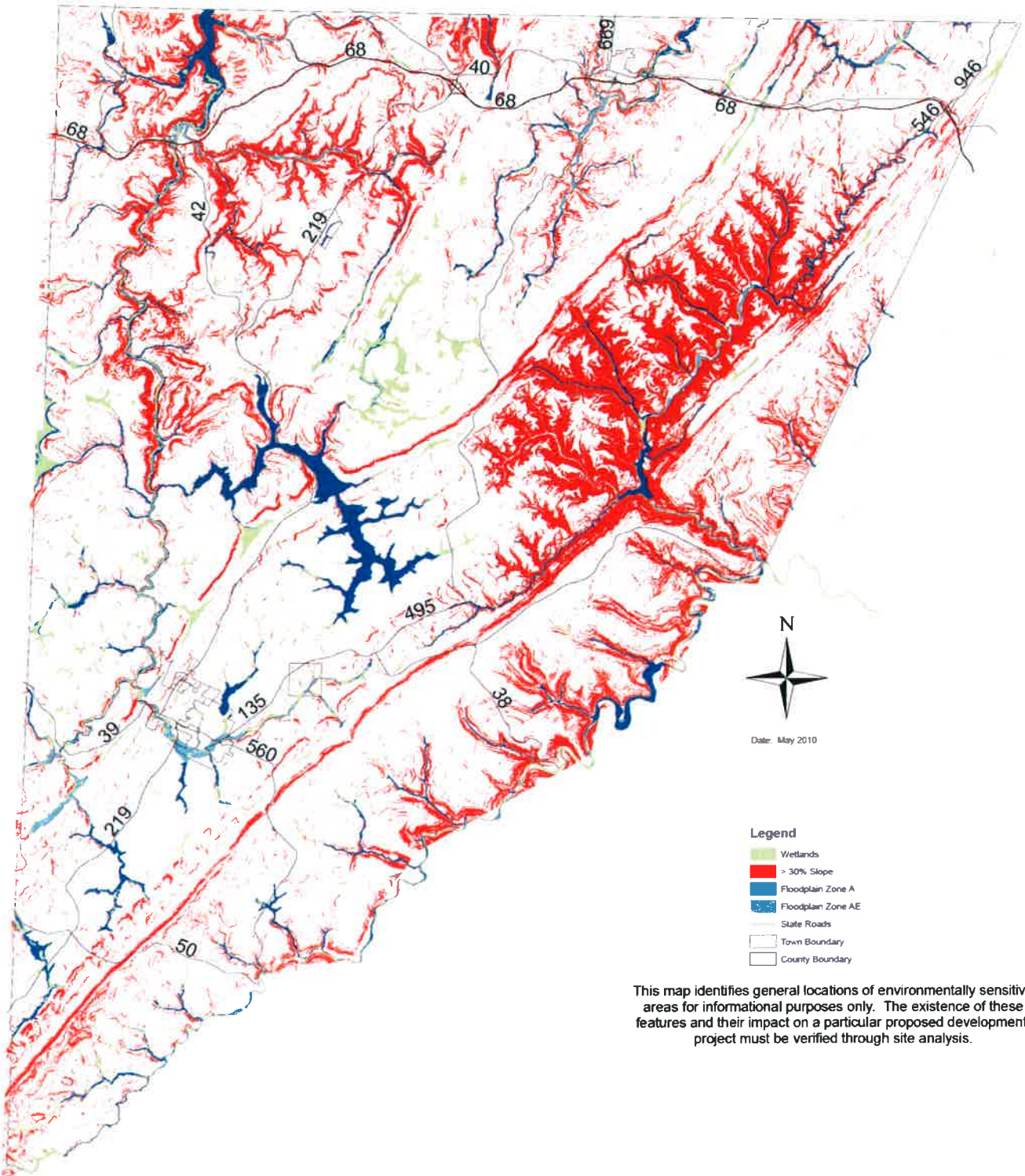
## Streams, Growth Areas, Habitats for State & Federal Endangered Species and Source Water Protection Areas





# Sensitive Areas; Map 2

## Steep Slopes, Floodplains and Wetlands



## 5. Implementing Ordinances and Programs

The following ordinances and programs are used by the County to work towards achieving its goals for the conservation of natural resource land:

- *2008 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan*- Encourages development in suitable areas and promotes the protection of sensitive areas and resources areas.
- *Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance*- Encourages orderly development, appropriate use of lands, and promotes the conservation of natural resources within the Deep Creek Watershed.
- *Garrett County Sensitive Areas Ordinance*- Provides regulations regarding steep slopes; stream buffers; rare, threatened or endangered species; wetlands, and source water protection areas as shown on Sensitive Areas Maps 1 and 2.
- *Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance*- Establishes development standards with a focus on preserving natural features.
- *2010 Stormwater Management Ordinance*- Establishes minimum requirements and procedures to control the adverse impacts associated with increased stormwater runoff and help restore, enhance, and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of streams.
- *2013 Erosion & Sediment Control Ordinance*- Establishes minimum requirements and procedures to control the adverse impacts of land development on water resources and help maintain the physical and biological integrity of streams.
- *2013 Garrett County Floodplain Management Ordinance*- Establishes regulations for floodplain development, helping to protect the vital functions of floodplains including maintenance of water quality, prevention of erosion, habitat for diverse natural wildlife populations, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic quality.
- *2014 Garrett County Water and Sewerage Master Plan*- stipulates that services should not be extended where this would allow inappropriate growth in areas where the Comprehensive Plan calls for conservation of resource land.

## **Chapter 4 - Agricultural Land Preservation**

### **1. Executive Summary / Overview**

Garrett County has a long tradition of agriculture predating the County's creation when it was split from Allegany County in 1872. Approximately 89,323 acres within the County are used for agriculture. Land preservation efforts provide a public benefit by helping to continue this tradition and by protecting valuable farmland for future generations. Agricultural easements are currently acquired under three programs in Garrett County: the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF); Rural Legacy; and the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET).

Garrett County has participated in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program since 1983. This program preserves agricultural land by working with private landowners to sell their development rights to MALPF while retaining the right to continue to use the land for farming. There are currently 56 MALPF easements within the County totaling 6,940.53 acres.

Maryland's Rural Legacy (RL) program was created in 1997 to protect large, contiguous tracts of Maryland's most precious cultural and natural resource lands through grants made to local applicants for land and easement acquisitions. Garrett County's 31,000-acre Rural Legacy Area covers the Bear Creek watershed near the town of Accident. There are currently 11 Bear Creek Rural Legacy easements totaling 1,395.04 acres.

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) is a land trust that acquires easements (by purchase or donation) on agricultural and natural resource lands throughout the state. MET holds approximately 21 easements in the County covering approximately 2,442 acres. The County is not directly involved with administration of MET easements.

Garrett County has also adopted the Garrett County Agricultural Land Preservation District program in order to help preserve productive local farmland and woodland. Districts are in effect for a minimum of 3 years and help screen and pre-qualify landowners wanting to sell a perpetual conservation easement to MALPF or Rural Legacy. Approved District properties are also eligible for a County Tax Credit on all agricultural lands and woodlands. There are currently 25 Districts totaling 3,204.19 acres.

### **2. Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation**

County goals for agricultural land preservation found in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan are to conserve agricultural and forest resource land (page 3-1) and preserve 20,000 acres of farmland by 2020 (page 7-1). These goals help to continue the long tradition of agriculture in Garrett County by providing suitable farmland for future generations. The County continues to work towards these goals by participating in the MALPF program, County District Program and County Tax Credit program. Due to limited funding in recent years, MALPF has had to combine the funding of two fiscal years into one easement application cycle. This has resulted in fewer purchased easements. Due to concerns over potential development of Marcellus Shale natural gas reserves, DNR enacted a policy to not purchase easements on properties with active gas leases in the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area. This policy effects most property owners within the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area and has not allowed the County to move forward with any Rural Legacy easements since 2008. DNR's policy severely hampered the County's land preservation efforts. Fortunately DNR revisited that policy this year, and has set aside an allocation to purchase more easements provided the land is not deemed to be at high risk for shale development.

State Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation are as follows:

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production;
- Protect natural, forestry and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland;
- 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;
- Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries;
- 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;
- Work with local governments to achieve the following:
  - Establish preservation areas, goals and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement state goals;
  - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large and state and local government officials;
  - 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;
  - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas;
  - 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.

The County and State goals are mostly complementary. Since the County does not have County-wide zoning, the County has limited land use management authority to limit the control of development in most rural areas.

### 3. Inventory of Preserved Agricultural Land

County #	Last Name	Map	Parcel	Acres	Easement Type	Easement Date
	Weise	58	306, 451, 635	64.72	MET	12/3/2007
	MET	50	688, 689, 690	2.2	MET	8/1/1988
	Putman	26	181	47.17	MET	5/26/2005
	Panther	71	127	67.21	MET	12/24/2004
	Herrington Place, LLC	71	114	85.76	MET	12/24/2004
	Cottrell Trust	27	25	27.85	MET	10/10/2003
	Garrett Co Comm.	49	118	550	MET	1/6/2003
	DNR	41	43	81	MET	9/22/2008
	Moors	04	113, 140	97.78	MET	11/15/1999
	Weise	58	85, 617	60.45	MET	12/3/2007
	Boyer & McDowell	36	57, 63	66.56	MET	11/29/2006
	Raesly	29	59	24.23	MET	12/6/2007
	Gates	29	89,91,96	29	MET	12/23/2013
	DNR	27	137	11.8	MET	10/10/2003
	Terrell	71	114	37	MET	12/24/2004
	James IV	18	32	46.19	MET	9/20/1995
	Cropp	87	65	15.27	MET	8/31/2010
	Braitman	20	179	24.56	MET	12/3/2008
	Vu	58	705	5.87	MET	8/1/1988
	MET	50	510	69.67	MET	8/1/1988
	Weise	66	302	0.226	MET	12/3/2007
	Paradise Enterprises	89	10	16.34	MET	11/2/1993
	Wright, Jr	18	16	78.64	MET	4/28/1994
	Bear Creek Ranch LLC	33	1	745.06	MET	3/19/2009
	Thomas	71	114	37	MET	12/24/2004
SY-1	CH-LO-MA Farms LLC	85	10, 113, 150	175.33	MALPF	4/1/1983
SY-3	Mattingly	85	12	34.57	MALPF	4/24/1985
SY-3	Arnold	85	196	70	MALPF	4/24/1985
SY-3	Peachy	85	42	27.85	MALPF	4/24/1985
SY-3	Kinsinger	85	34	41.87	MALPF	4/24/1985
SY-4	Riley	85	107	106	MALPF	1/17/1984
SY-8	Mattingly	85	13	53.55	MALPF	10/10/1990
PC-10	Ganoe, Jr.	11	78	103.8	MALPF	2/28/2007
SY-11	Ridder	95	35	234.87	MALPF	6/25/1987
SY-12	Miller	95	67	11.8	MALPF	6/25/1987
SY-13	Bachtel	99	5	73.06	MALPF	11/18/2011
SY-14	Roth	100	6	88.21	MALPF	10/25/1984
SY-15	Ridder	95	116	43.53	MALPF	10/21/2005
BC-18	Kolb Farms, Inc	24	5	200.82	MALPF	8/4/1989

County #	Last Name	Map	Parcel	Acres	Easement Type	Easement Date
SY-24	Green	72	35	197.76	MALPF	3/4/1991
DC-25	Pristine Farm LLC	67	770	224.91	MALPF	9/18/1990
DC-25	Custer	68	81, 82	84.41	MALPF	9/18/1990
DC-25	Custer	67	14	71.76	MALPF	9/18/1990
SY-26	Mason	85	207	23.2	MALPF	6/29/1987
SR-27	Brown	37	11	191.27	MALPF	1/4/1989
SR-28	Brown	28	19, 25	205.8	MALPF	10/22/1987
SY-29	Hauser	95	98	181.5	MALPF	12/28/1987
SY-33	Moyer	99	27	100.28	MALPF	1/16/1990
SR-35	Bequette	29	40	136.59	MALPF	12/27/1990
SR-36	Stafford	37	3	107.344	MALPF	8/3/1995
SR-40	Wilhelm	38	1	272.497	MALPF	2/7/1995
CR-41	Beitzel	43	2, 83	98.66	MALPF	5/16/1996
CR-42	Glotfelty	43	25	144.09	MALPF	9/20/1994
DC-50	O'Brien	59	45	102.67	MALPF	3/4/1998
SR-51	Brown	28	47	36	MALPF	12/1/1998
NCY-52	Bishoff	41	97	104.41	MALPF	12/31/1999
CR-55	Turner	35	87	111.29	MALPF	8/7/2000
CR-56	Meadow Mt. Sports Club	35	100	20.34	MALPF	8/25/2000
SR-57	Stafford	37	3	8.132	MALPF	3/27/2001
SR-58	Conner	37	1	157.11	MALPF	1/8/2001
CR-59	Turner	35	87	70.2	MALPF	12/13/2001
SY-60	Harsh	94	8	87.84	MALPF	8/19/2003
SY-61	Gower	72	42, 79, 84	198.9	MALPF	7/9/2002
SR-62	Custer	60	60, 79	132.11	MALPF	1/11/2002
SR-62	Custer	60	7	143.67	MALPF	1/11/2002
DC-67	Mernone	59 & 51	601, 604 & 69	117	MALPF	9/3/2002
BC-68	Shane	16	19	150.87	MET	4/18/1984
SY-70	Tribbey	91	2, 85, 91, 101, 143, 145	182.065	MALPF	4/17/2003
SY-73	Bernard	85	55	98.7	MALPF	6/29/2004
CR-74	Maust	17	12, 13	125	MALPF	12/19/2003
SY-76	Brenneman	91	40	151.57	MALPF	8/26/2004
SY-77	Kepple	95	106, 107	45.41	MALPF	5/1/2006
SY-78	Hebb	100	8	103.02	MALPF	8/21/2006
BC-80	Harman Farms LLC	33	36	158.45	Rural Legacy	5/27/2004
BC-81	Englar	15	16	49.574	Rural Legacy	5/21/2004
BC-82	Sherrard	24	19	172.3	Rural Legacy	5/27/2004
BC-86	Bender	16	73	70.88	Rural Legacy	1/14/2005
BC-87	Kahl Farm LLC	42	460	147.487	MALPF	5/22/2007
BC-88	Bender	16	40	152.92	Rural Legacy	6/1/2006
DC-89	Sunny/Steiding	67 & 74	122, 249 & 237	121.31	MALPF	3/11/2008

County #	Last Name	Map	Parcel	Acres	Easement Type	Easement Date
SY-90	Petersheim	84	53	63.27	MALPF	3/12/2008
SY-91	Miller	91	103	62.77	MALPF	6/30/2008
SY-92	Swartzentruber	85	48	122.99	MALPF	4/28/2008
BC-93	Broadwater	24	71	267.32	Rural Legacy	11/13/2008
SY-94	Kern	95	36	121.5	MALPF	4/8/2009
BC-95	Devine	15	29	139.943	Rural Legacy	1/15/2008
SY-96	Evans	79	175, 47, 311	150.35	MALPF	5/26/2010
BC-97	Margroff	16	11	114.42	Rural Legacy	6/24/2008
NY-100	Vitez	5	38	135.6	MALPF	11/30/2010
NY-101	Vitez	5	182	55.14	MALPF	11/8/2016
CR-103	Shawley	44	3	95.669	MALPF	10/23/2012
BC-104	Beitzel	33	51	86.51	Rural Legacy	12/13/2011
PC-105	Ganoe II	11	258, 40	51.36	MALPF	10/19/2011
BC-106	Klotz	32	106	81.96	Rural Legacy	6/9/2011
DC-107	Parandhamaia	59	64	155.79	MALPF	4/16/2010
BC-109	Schmuck	24	314	100.76	Rural Legacy	8/30/2011
SY-117	Baker	86 & 85	163 & 3	123.084	MALPF	8/25/2014
SY-118	White	79	80	98.92	MALPF	6/25/2014
PC-120	Ganoe	11	79	134.52	MALPF	6/9/2016
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>				<b>10,777.99</b>		

#### 4. Mapping

A map showing preserved agriculture land is located on page 40 of the Natural Resources Land Conservation Chapter.

#### 5. Additional Agricultural Land Preservation Guidelines

The following section evaluates strategies and actions (in italics) presented in the 2012 LPPRP and describes whether or not they were implemented.

- *Continue to support the purchase of agricultural easements.* The County has continued to assist landowners wishing to pursue agricultural easements through the MALPF program. Since 2008, the County's support of easements in the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area was thwarted by DNR's policies and withdrawal of funding. Fortunately, DNR has revised their policies and has set aside an allocation to purchase more easements provided the land is not deemed to be at high risk for shale gas development.
- *Explore use of Installment Purchase Agreements (IPAs) as a means of acquiring easements on a greater number of acres of farmland in a shorter period of time.* Garrett County has not yet used IPAs. Since Garrett County does not typically make the payments for easements this does not appear to be a relevant goal for the future.
- *Encourage development to occur in designated Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) and clustering of new housing development in locations outside designated PFAs.* Garrett County continues to encourage development to occur in PFAs. This goal is hampered by the fact that only a small percent of the County is located within PFAs. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan included options for clustering of new lots that included density incentives in the Agricultural and Rural Resource Areas. The severe subdivision restrictions forced on the County by the Agricultural Land Preservation Act of 2012 have severely undermined these provisions. There is no longer any incentive for clustering due to the Act's prohibitions against major subdivisions in most areas of the County. In general, the economic slowdown since 2008 has also reduced development pressure in most rural areas of the County. During the next Comprehensive Plan review cycle, development patterns and trends should be reviewed and ordinance changes should be considered if warranted.
- *Encourage farmers who must sell their farms to sell to other farmers.* This recommendation would have established a farm brokerage program matching older farmers with younger ones and sellers with prospective farmer buyers, including an incubation program that would link new farmers with established farmers who might assist in transitioning ownership or purchase of farm equipment over an extended period of time. This recommendation has not been implemented. Garrett County's farm turnover rate is low and usually involves family transfers precluding the current need for a farm brokerage program. Since the County has limited involvement in the sale of private land this does not appear to be a relevant goal for the future.
- *Continue to avoid extension of public water and sewer facilities into prime agricultural areas.* The 2008 Comprehensive Plan stated that no extensions of public water or sewer services would be permitted in land designated AR and RR except to correct health or safety problems in existing developed areas (pages 3-12 and 3-13). The 2014 Garrett County Water and Sewerage Master Plan adopted on December 9, 2014 reiterated and formalized these restrictions.
- *Continue to participate in the Rural Legacy program to extend the resources available through MALPF to purchase easements on farmland.* Due to concerns over potential development of Marcellus Shale natural gas reserves, DNR enacted a policy to not purchase easements on properties with active gas leases in the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area. This policy effected most property owners within the Bear Creek Rural Legacy Area and resulted in the County not being able to move forward with any Rural Legacy easements since 2008. Fortunately, DNR has revised that policy and granted Garrett County funding in 2016 to purchase additional easements provided the land is not deemed to be at high risk for shale development.



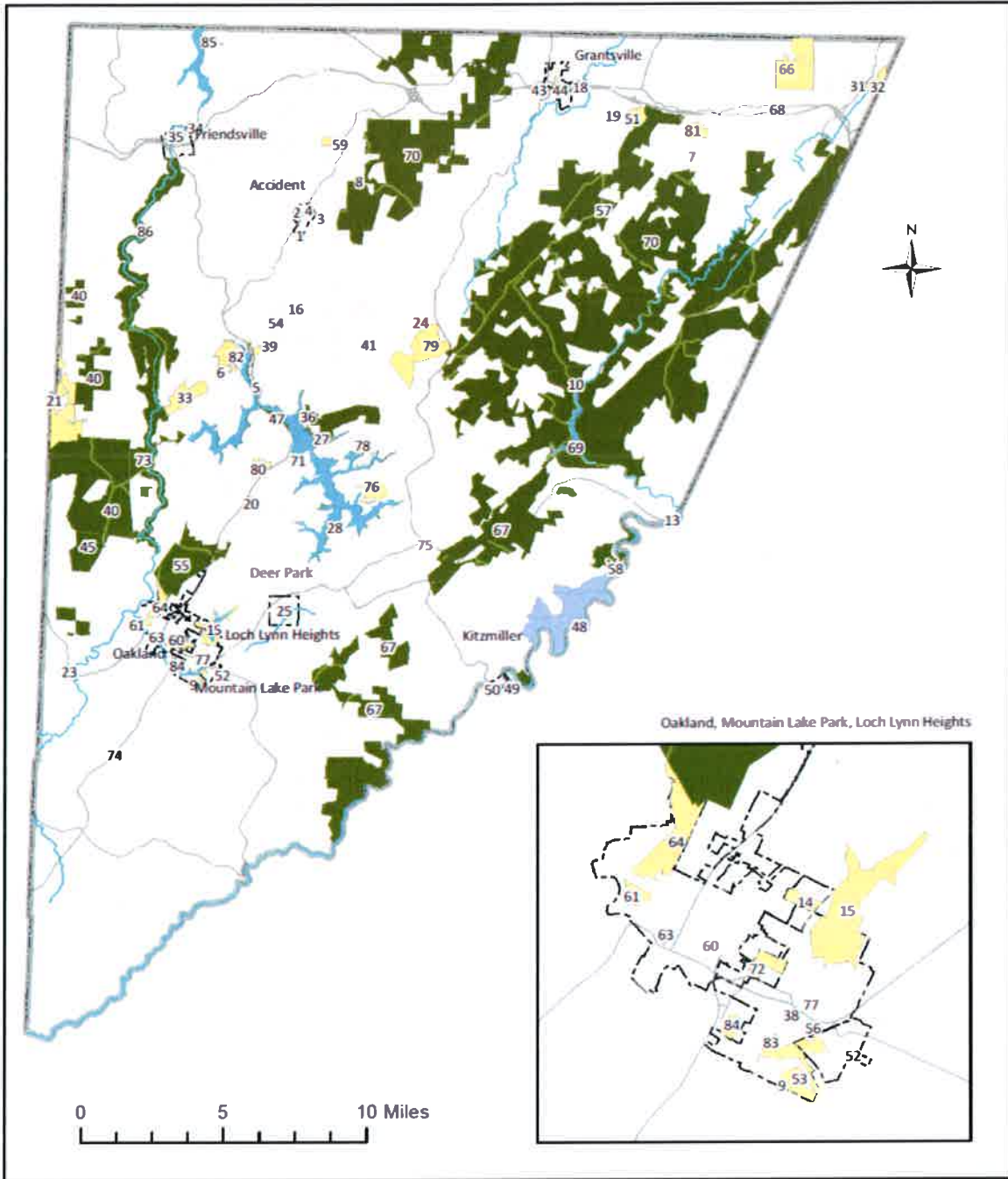
- *Continue to utilize the County Tax Credit Program to provide incentive to farmers to maintain Agricultural Preservation Program Districts and to encourage formation of additional designated Agricultural Preservation Districts.* Garrett County continues to utilize both programs. A Garrett County District Agreement is a voluntary agreement that remains in effect for a minimum of three years. The District Agreement provides the security of knowing that the land is protected from development and is a valuable first step in securing more permanent protection. Approved District properties are eligible for a County Tax Credit on all agricultural lands and woodlands. Taxes continue to be assessed on all residential and agricultural structures but the property tax on all real estate is 100% rebated under the program. Garrett County currently has a total of 21 Districts containing approximately 2,127 acres. Fourteen of these Districts are taking advantage of the County Tax Credit Program. Three of these District properties have pending MALPF easement applications.
- *Encourage formation of a private, non-profit Local Land Trust to support current efforts to protect farmland.* The Allegheny Highlands Conservancy (AHC) was formed in 2004 with a mission "To conserve the natural resources, scenic beauty, and rural character of the Allegheny Highlands of Maryland". AHC partnered with the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) to protect ten properties and over 1,200 acres in Garrett County. In August of 2015 the board of the AHC voted to dissolve the organization and transfer all of AHC's remaining assets to MET. An August 20, 2015 press release from AHC cited factors such as reduced interest in land conservation, the potential impact of Marcellus shale gas extraction and decreased interest and participation in the organization as factors that limited their viability. Although Garrett County would continue to support local land trusts, the experience of AHC indicates that such groups may not be feasible. Therefore encouraging formation of such groups may not be a practical future goal.

The 2008 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan did not establish priority preservation programs. The County's goals are implemented through the Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance and Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance by establishing lot size requirements. The County monitors the effectiveness of these programs during review of the Comprehensive Plan.



# Appendix A

## Park Inventory Map

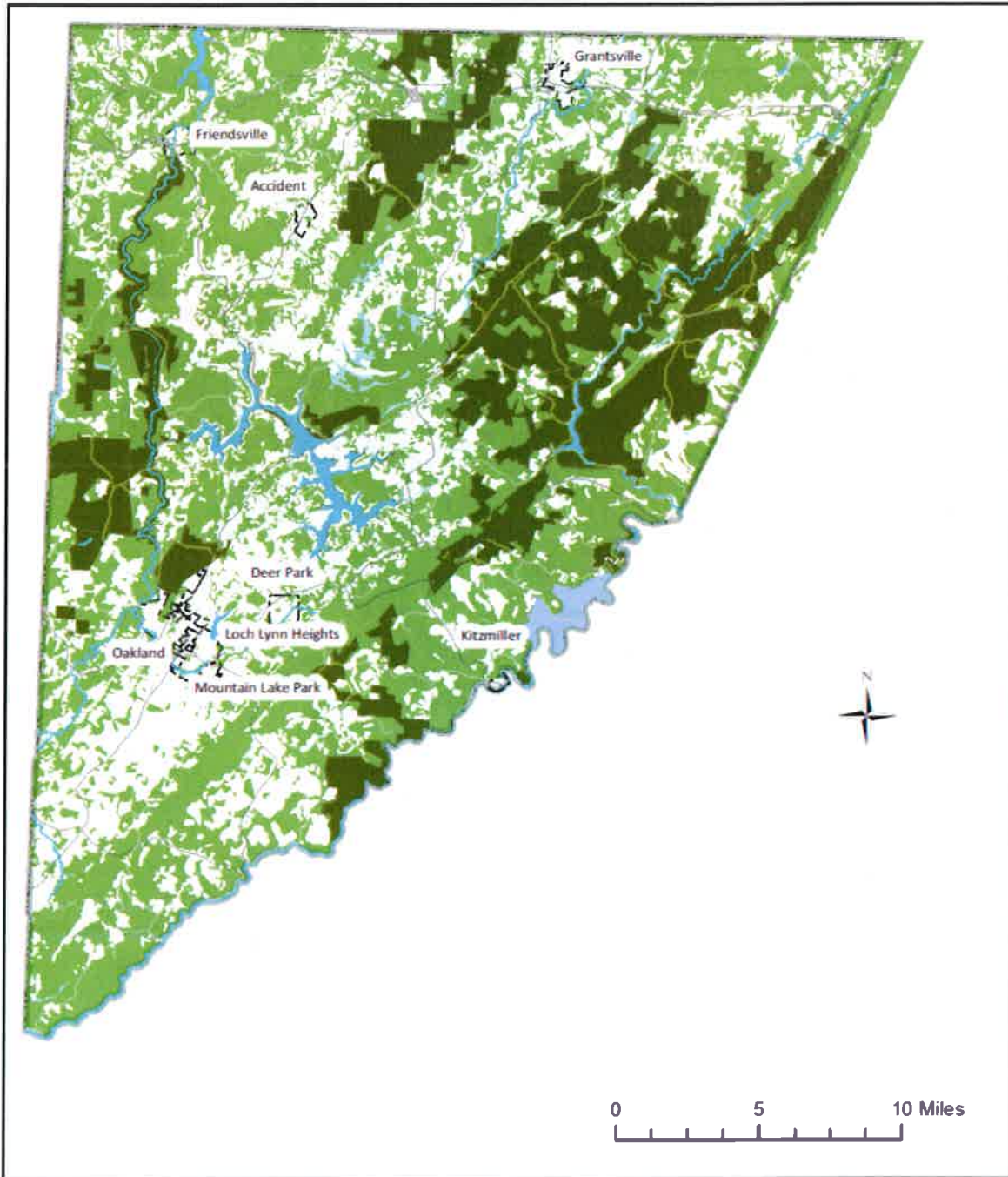


Street Centerlines	Rivers	Park Inventory	Federal	Town Boundary
COUNTY	Lakes	Ownership	State	County Boundary
STATE		Local		

Park Inventory	
1	Accident Community Park East
2	Accident Community Park West
3	Accident Elementary School
4	Accident Community Pond
5	Aquatic Center
6	ASCI - Adventure Sports Center Int'l.
7	Avilton Community Center
8	Bear Creek Hatchery Fish Mgmt. Area
9	Bennett Estate
10	Big Run State Park
11	Bill's Outdoor Center
12	Bills Marine Service, Inc.
13	Bloomington Fire Co. Town Park
14	Broadford Elementary & Southern Middle Schools
15	Broadford Lake Recreation Area
16	Bumble Bee RV Park & Campground
17	Camp Deep Creek
18	Casselman River Bridge State Park
19	Casselman Valley Soccer Complex
20	Circle R Ranch
21	Cranesville Swamp
22	Crellin Community Park
23	Crellin Elementary School
24	Cunningham Swamp Wildlife Mgmt. Area
25	Deer Park Playground
26	Deep Creek Lake NRMA
27	Deep Creek Lake State Park
28	Deep Creek Lake Sailing Assoc.
29	Deep Creek Marina
30	Double G Campground
31	Finzel Community Park
32	Finzel Swamp (Cranberry Swamp)
33	Fork Run Recreation Area
34	Friendsville Community Park
35	Friendsville Elementary School
36	Fulcher P. Smith Conservation Area
37	Fun Time Watersports
38	G Street Green Space
39	Garrett College & Community Aquatic & Recreation Complex (CARC)
40	Garrett State Forest
41	The Glades- Nature Conservancy
42	Grantsville Community Park
43	Grantsville Town Park
44	Grantsville Elementary School
45	Herrington Manor State Park

Site	
46	Hickory Environmental Education Center
47	High Mt. Sports / Traders Landing
48	Jennings Randolph Lake
49	Kitzmiller Community Park
50	Kitzmiller Elementary School
51	Little Meadows Lake
52	Loch Lynn Park (Old School)
53	Loch Lynn Community Park
54	McHenry Park
55	Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area
56	Mountain Lake Park Tennis Club
57	New Germany State Park
58	North Branch Potomac Fish Mgt. Area
59	Northern High School/Middle School
60	Oakland Community Center (Armory)
61	Oakland Glades Town Park
62	Oakland Rotary Park
63	Oakland B&O Train Station
64	Oakland Country Club
65	Patterson's Boat Company
66	Piney Reservoir
67	Potomac State Forest
68	Route 40 Elementary School
69	Savage River Reservoir
70	Savage River State Forest
71	Silver Tree Marina
72	Southern High School
73	Swallow Falls State Park
74	Swan Meadow Elementary School
75	Swanton Senior/Community Center
76	Thousand Acres Lakeside Golf Club
77	Veterans Park
78	Waterfront Greens Golf Course
79	Western MD 4-H Education Center
80	Western Trails
81	Winnfield Golf- Avilton
82	Wisp Resort
83	Wooddell Park
84	Yough Glades Elementary School
85	Youghiogheny River Lake, Mill Run Recreation Area
86	Youghiogheny Scenic & Wild River

# Appendix B Natural Resources



Appendix C

Garrett County Maryland Protected Lands

