

## Frederick County, Maryland Land Conservation Workshop (June 2009)



On June 3, 2009 the Potomac Conservancy and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program convened various conservation interests working throughout Frederick County to better understand the goals of the various organizations; identify opportunities for future conservation; and explore ways to more effectively collaborate in areas of common interest. The workshop was held at Thorpewood in Thurmont, MD.

The following organizations were invited to participate: Appalachian Trail Conservancy-Potomac Chapter; Audubon Society of Central Maryland; Catoctin Land Trust; Carrollton Manor Land Trust; Catoctin Forest Alliance; Catoctin Mountain National Scenic Byway; Central Maryland Heritage League; City of Frederick Watershed; Civil War Preservation Trust; Frederick County Farm Bureau; Frederick County Agricultural Preservation Board; Frederick County Soil Conservation Board; Frederick County Divisions of Parks and Recreation, Planning and Public Works; Frederick County Forestry Board; Frederick County Landmarks Foundation; Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area; Journey through Hallowed Ground Partnership; Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation; Maryland Environmental Trust; Maryland Land Trust Alliance; Maryland National Road Association; Maryland State Highways Administration, Scenic Byways Program; Mid-Maryland Land Trust Association; Monocacy-Catoctin Watershed Alliance; and Tourism Council of Frederick County, Inc.

A total of 24 participants attended on behalf of several of the aforementioned organizations.

The workshop's desired outcomes included:

- To have a clear understanding of each other's mission, goals, and areas of geographic focus;

- To identify the geographic and programmatic gaps, and to develop a strategy for closing those gaps;
- To agree on ways to better communicate and coordinate with each other in the future;
- To recognize the shared challenges to working on conservation in Frederick County and to strategize group approaches to addressing those challenges;
- To organize into smaller groups (if appropriate) to work on common geographic or programmatic goals.

### **Background Information:**

Frederick County, Maryland is in the midst of a region rich in natural, historical and cultural resources. Natural features extend from the mixed hardwood forests of South Mountain and the Catoctins to the fertile farmlands surrounding the Monocacy River. These scenic landscapes are also the context so important to the early Native American inhabitants of the region, historic events associated with the Civil War, and cultural traditions of early American settlement. Many of the more outstanding resources have been protected through national, state and local designation, frequently aided by the actions of non-profit organizations.

### **Conservation at the Crossroads**

The legacy of land protection efforts in Frederick County by national, state and local organizations during the latter half of the 1900's is now jeopardized by encroaching development and increasing fragmentation. The County's agricultural preservation efforts continue to protect valuable farmlands sustaining an important local economy. Several small land trusts and conservation organizations remain focused on local land protection efforts often without a regional perspective. In recent years, there has been an increasing effort to address specific natural, historical and recreational needs as each arises with little involvement by the larger conservation community. Such a disparate approach to land protection may not effectively protect important resources from fragmentation resulting from increased growth pressures. Even though resource rich lands may continue to be protected, landscape context may be lost, along with cultural and historical integrity, due to a lack of strategic and proactive conservation. The diversity of conservation-related actions has grown substantially further exacerbating coordination. More recent actions include the Lower and Upper Monocacy Watershed Restoration Action Plan, Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, and the Catoctin Mountain National Scenic Byway, all of which have identified lands important for conservation.

### **Workshop Desired Outcomes**

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### **Sponsor Organizations and Contacts**

The *Potomac Conservancy* protects the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries. The Conservancy's primary focus is protection of water quality through land protection and sound land use practices. Because clean water alone is not enough, the Conservancy also works to preserve and restore the Potomac's scenic landscapes, and to enhance river-based recreational opportunities.

Bryan Seipp, Director of Restoration, Potomac Conservancy at 301-608-1188, x207.

The *National Park Service* preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resource values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the country and the world. The *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program* works with people and organizations to implement the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

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