

# 2012



## *Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*

Worcester County Department of



Recreation & Parks

# Acknowledgments

## County Commissioners

Bud Church, President  
Louise L. Gulyas  
Judy Boggs  
Virgil L. Shockley  
Merrill W. Lockfaw, Jr.  
James L. Purnell, Jr.  
Madison J. Bunting, Jr.



## Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

William E. Regan, Chair  
Burton Anderson  
Tim Cadotte  
Craig Glovier  
Albin Handy  
Chris Klebe  
Joe Mitrecic

## Department of Recreation & Parks

Sharon DeMar Reilly, Director  
Jennifer Standish, Recreation Supervisor

## Planning Commission

Marlene Ott, Acting Chair  
Brooks Clayville, Secretary  
Betty Smith  
Mike Diffendal  
Wayne Hartman  
Coston Gladding  
Richard Wells

## Department of Development, Review, and Permitting

Ed Tudor, Director  
Katherine Munson, Planner IV



RESOLUTION NO. 12 - 7

RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2012 WORCESTER COUNTY  
LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland adopted a Worcester County Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Plan on April 18, 2006 (the 2006 Plan) which identifies specific actions for improving parks, recreation and open space preservation in Worcester County; and

WHEREAS, Title 5, Subtitle 9 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Program Open Space Law) requires each county and Baltimore City to prepare a land preservation, parks and recreation plan every six years with the over-arching purpose of developing a strategy that will best ensure good return on public investment in the various state and local land preservation and recreation programs in order to remain eligible to receive Maryland Program Open Space (POS) funds, the State's primary grant program for parks, recreation and open space preservation; and

WHEREAS, the County Commissioners authorized the County Planning Commission to prepare a new Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Plan to replace the 2006 Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, with the assistance of staff from the Worcester County Department of Development Review and Permitting and the Worcester County Department of Recreation and Parks, prepared and presented to the Commissioners such a Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on April 12, 2012, and considered public comment on the proposed Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan and have complied with all other requirements of law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland hereby adopt the *2012 Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* as revised April 19, 2012 and incorporated herein by reference which shall replace the 2006 Plan.

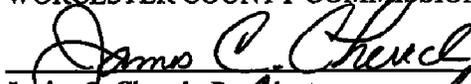
AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect upon its passage.

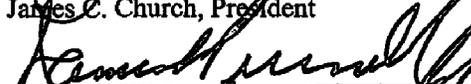
PASSED AND ADOPTED this 1<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2012.

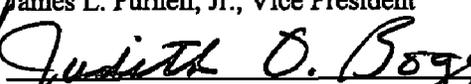
ATTEST:

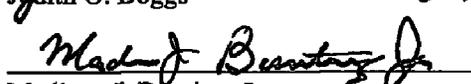
  
Gerald T. Mason  
Chief Administrative Officer

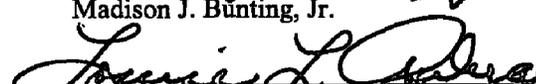
WORCESTER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

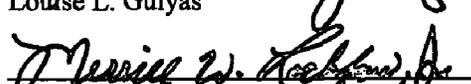
  
James C. Church, President

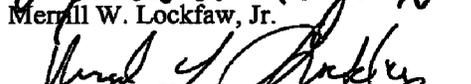
  
James L. Purnell, Jr., Vice President

  
Judith O. Boggs

  
Madison J. Bunting, Jr.

  
Louise L. Gulyas

  
Merrill W. Lockfaw, Jr.

  
Virgil L. Shockley



## Executive Summary

---

Program Open Space law as most recently amended requires all Maryland counties to prepare local parks, recreation, and land preservation plans every six years. The last county plan was adopted April 18, 2006. State Guidelines require a new plan to be adopted by July 1, 2012.

The primary functions of the 2012 plan are to:

- Address the recommendations for parks and recreation made in the State's 2009 *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*
- Provide a brief update of the progress of local agricultural and natural lands programs since 2006.

Chapter II presents Worcester County's parks and recreation programming and a plan of action for development and direction for the next five years. Presented is supply and demand data, and an analysis of local needs for recreation land and facilities.

Analysis of Worcester County's recreational lands inventory shows that the county exceeds the state recreation acreage goal of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons.

Chapter III documents the progress made toward achievement of the agricultural land preservation goals identified in the 2009 State LPPRP and the 2006 County LPPRP. Chapter IV presents Worcester County's efforts to protect natural resource lands, and an

analysis of performance and identification of needed improvements.

Key indicators of progress made since 2006:

- Over 700 acres annually were protected with various land protection programs
- Less than 0.01% of the A-1 zone was subdivided for residential use
- New zoning code was adopted in 2009 that maintains the county's long-standing commitment to sound planning

In conclusion, Worcester County has developed strong recreational and land preservation programs. The county recognizes that continued population growth (which is expected to enlarge the baby-boomer segment of the population, in particular) and development pressure necessitate continued support and development of appropriately targeted recreational facilities and programming, as well as continued county and state funding of land protection for agriculture and habitat preservation.

## Chapter I: Introduction

---

The 2012 *Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* (2012 LPPRP) updates the county's 2006 *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* in accord with the state of Maryland's 2010 Guidelines and with Title 5, Subtitle 9 of the Natural Resources Article of the Maryland Annotated Code (Program Open Space Law). Current Program Open Space Law, requires each county and Baltimore City to prepare a parks, recreation and land preservation plan every six years, starting July 1, 2005. (Given the late publication of the state plan in 2009, its expanded scope and content, and the key issues identified, the 2010 plan was determined by Maryland Department of Planning to be due July 1, 2012.)

The 2012 LPPRP addresses recreation, parks, agricultural land preservation and natural resource protection. It is a joint effort of Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks and Department of Development Review and Permitting. The Department of Recreation & Parks drafted Chapter II; the Department of Development Review and Permitting prepared the remaining chapters.

The purpose of the 2012 LPPRP is to:

- Address the recommendations for parks and recreation made in the State's 2009 *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*
- Update parks and recreation inventory and the 15-year capital improvement program for short-, mid- and long-term.
- Provide a brief update of the progress of local agricultural and

natural lands programs since 2006.

The 2012 LPPRP conforms with and is referenced in the Worcester County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted March 7, 2006.

Chapter Three of the comprehensive plan addresses natural resources and land protection. Chapter Six of the comprehensive plan identifies ten parks and recreation objectives, including updating the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan per state requirements.

The 2012 LPPRP is also compatible with the state's Planning Act, the *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Maryland's Coastal Bays* and the *Management Plan for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area*.

The 2012 LPPRP is organized as follows:

Chapter II describes current recreational programming and facilities in detail. It also includes a needs analysis, and presents priorities for program development for the next five years.

The county's top twelve needs for the next six years are:

1. Acquisition of additional recreational land in northern Worcester County
2. Adequate maintenance and storage facilities
3. Drainage improvements

4. Parking areas
5. Field lighting upgrades
6. Tennis court resurfacing
7. Fencing renovations
8. Field renovations
9. Dugout renovations
10. Completion of amenities to two  
new county parks
11. Playground upgrades/  
replacements
12. Trails

Chapter III and IV review the county's agricultural and natural resource lands protection programs' progress since the last plan was adopted in 2006.

## Chapter II: Recreation, Parks, and Open Space

### Background

The 2012 *Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is a blueprint that will guide us through a sustainable quality of life for the present and for years to come.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- Describe state and county goals for recreational lands and programming;
- Illustrate how Worcester County’s parks and recreational programming is compatible with the county comprehensive plan;
- Describe parks and programming currently provided by the county;
- Present a needs analysis for land, facilities and rehabilitation; and
- Explicate the county’s priorities for acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation.

Worcester County is a vibrant and diverse county. Continued creation of recreational programming, parks development, and land preservation should be a significant component of the county’s public service to its citizens. These recreational and park’s



Swimming lessons are offered to youth over 3 years of age.  
Photo: Department of Recreation & Parks

environments enhance the formation of healthy, vital towns, communities, and villages throughout Worcester County.

The mission of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks is to provide a variety of quality recreational programs, pristine parks, and facilities to enrich the lives of citizens.

### State Goals

Worcester County supports and promotes the state of Maryland’s overall goals for recreation, parks, and open space preservation. These state goals include the following:

- “Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being;
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the state more desirable places to live, work and visit;
- Use state investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local; comprehensive/master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect

natural open spaces and resources;

- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities; and,
- 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.”

### **Worcester County Comprehensive Plan Goals**

Worcester County’s parks and recreational programming is guided by the goals and policies of the county’s comprehensive plan.

The 2006 comprehensive plan’s stated goal is to maintain and improve the county’s rural and coastal character, protect its natural resources and ecological functions, accommodate a planned amount of growth served by adequate public facilities, improve development’s compatibility and aesthetics, continue the county’s prosperous economy, and provide for resident’s safety and health.



Worcester County’s Chincoteague Bay shoreline is characterized by pristine tidal marshes.  
Photo: Department of Development Review and Permitting

The following objectives, stated in the 2006 comprehensive plan, direct the county’s recreation and parks programming:

1. Maintain and enhance the county’s livability.
2. Provide adequate public health, safety, social, recreation, and waste disposal services.
3. Protect drinking water supplies.
4. Preserve and protect natural resources and their ecological functions.
5. Facilitate the county’s economic activity.
6. Maintain and enhance the county’s cultural and historic assets.
7. Accommodate planned future growth through designated “growth centers” with development standards designed to minimize environmental and habitat disruption.
8. Undertake land preservation and other methods to preserve existing and establish new open space and “greenway” to ensure habitat diversity and corridors throughout the county.
9. Provide for adequate public services to facilitate the desired amount of services and pattern the growth.
10. Encourage development of traditional communities that reduce reliance on vehicles and are compatible with Eastern Shore vernacular architectural style.

The challenge ahead is to continue the “smart growth” pattern. The county must ensure that parks and recreational programming policies remain consistent

with maintenance of this growth pattern. The county goals for recreation and parks support the goals as outlined in the 2006 comprehensive plan and the state goals and visions.

### **County Parks and Recreation Programs**

This section describes Worcester County's growth management procedures for parks and recreation programs. It also provides a current account of the county recreational programs and county park facilities.

### **Major Parks in Growth Areas**

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks has been successful in locating the major parks in planned population centers throughout the county. Through strategic planning, the larger county sports complexes have been positioned close to the growth areas and population centers, as illustrated on Figure II – 1 and Figure II - 2.

Additionally, Ocean City and Ocean Pines have public recreational facilities and programs that support recreation in densely populated areas of the county. Concurrently, small parks are easily accessible to the rural areas and surrounding communities.

While parks are maintained throughout the county, the majority of the parks are located in the northern part of Worcester County where most growth is concentrated. Major park development has taken place at the parks located in

the northern part of Worcester County since the 2006 *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*. Additionally, one new park has been acquired that is located in the northern part of the county and one new park has been obtained in the central part of the county. In addition, these parks contribute to community sustainability and provide open space for the citizens of Worcester County.

### **Preserve and Protect Sensitive Areas**

The park planning and master planning process includes sensitive areas protection. Invasive plant species are managed to protect native flora where appropriate park land is managed to encourage natural habitat. Prudent

stewardship will ensure that the county's parks and natural resources are protected for many generations to come.

### **Rural Area Park Development**

Through Program Open Space (POS) funding, the county has acquired and preserved open land in existing population centers in the rural areas. These

smaller county parks located in the county's rural villages, such as Stockton or Whaleyville, help to maintain the rural quality of these less populated areas while also meeting the recreational needs of the citizens in the immediate surrounding areas.

Recently, property has been acquired that will be developed into a smaller county park in the Village of Girdletree. This 3 acre parcel will allow the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks to facilitate the



creation of a recreational outlet for the youth, adults, and visitors to the village.

### **Environment Protection and Stewardship**

The protection of the Chesapeake Bay has been an on-going priority of Worcester County. Protection of Maryland's coastal bays has also been incorporated into Worcester County's long-term vision. Acquisition and protection of waterfront has been a high priority in the fast-developing northern portion of the county. One bayfront park has been acquired since the adoption of the *2006 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan*. Greys Creek Nature Park property is located at the extreme northeast tip of Worcester County and offers an unsurpassed view of the Assawoman Bay. The towering skylines of north Ocean City, Maryland and Fenwick Island, Delaware, on one side of the bay and the serene, unassuming marshlands of this park on the other offer validation to the reason the property was preserved for perpetuity. A comparable contrasting view that would exemplify the need to preserve wetlands, as well as uplands, adjacent to the coastal bays of Maryland would be hard to find.

Providing coastal stewardship was an essential factor in the decision of Worcester County to lease the Isle of Wight Park as of July 2004 from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This is a park that is primarily surrounded by water and affords visitors the opportunity to participate in fishing, crabbing, clamming, kayaking and canoeing along with picnicking, and exploring this natural island on the Isle of Wight Bay.

During 2011, Worcester County has obtained Ayer Creek/Holly Grove

Swamp area as the newest park land. This expansive 420 acre property will be protected in perpetuity as a nature reserve. This land will be used as passive park land and Maryland Coastal Bay Foundation will assist with property management of this coastal plain forest block, according to the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELP).

Three intergovernmental programs, Chesapeake Bay Tributaries Strategies Implementation Team, the Ocean City and Vicinity Water Resources Feasibility Study, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, have been significant elements in the stewardship of our waterways. Worcester County faces a momentous challenge to protect these valuable water resources for all citizens of Maryland while also affording recreational opportunities.

### **Natural Resource Conservation**

Worcester County has strategically located parks in close proximity to existing developed areas and growth centers in the northern, central, and southern part of the county. It is through careful park planning that the county can continue to conserve resources while achieving efficient development patterns.

In March of 2010, Worcester County was awarded \$299,692 by the Maryland Energy Administration. These grant funds will be utilized to provide engineering, construction, and installation of a complete Grid-Tied Photovoltaic System adjacent to the Recreation Center, which will supplement energy to the Recreation Center. This, in turn, will help the County conserve energy.

Since 2000, Worcester County has aggressively pursued funding for land protection in areas not targeted for growth, and over 12,577 acres have been permanently protected.

### **Parks and Recreation Contributions to Economic Growth**

Worcester County understands the contribution of accessible recreational facilities to economic growth of the county. The county has completed the construction of the new Recreation Center located at John Walter Smith Park in Snow Hill. This facility has become a major recreational facility, drawing users from both within and outside of the county and region. The facility has contributed to the quality of life for local citizens and has provided an economic boost to both existing and new businesses in Snow Hill and the county.

Land and water recreational resources, programs, and parks provided by the county significantly impact the local economy.

In addition, another area of economic growth that could benefit the County in the future would be to explore the idea of a trail system along the Berlin Assateague corridor.

### **Infrastructure**

Worcester County has a significant supply of recreation facilities and acreage to serve current needs and continued needs through 2022. However, the county recognizes that there is deficit of recreational land in the northern portion of the county, where growth is concentrated.

Greys Creek Nature Park is in the process of being developed in the

northern end of the county, which is the fast growth area in Worcester County. The main objective in acquiring this 574+ acre property is to conserve this significant land and provide increased opportunities to safeguard habitat, improve water quality of the Maryland coastal bays, and to provide a sustainable environmental education program.

### **Partnerships Create Financial Resources**

Worcester County relies on effective and innovative strategies and partnerships. Support and cooperation from Program Open Space, the County Commissioners, Capital Improvements Projects, Park Improvement Funds, and additional grant funding are all financial resources that are critical elements in assuring optimum use of the financial resources for parks and natural resource protection. In addition, it should be noted that Worcester County requires that new developments include active and/or passive recreation areas.

### **Programs**

Over the past five years, the county's recreational programming and administration has had a tremendous growth spurt: program offerings have doubled. Effective marketing has improved citizen awareness of programs.

Providing a variety of recreational opportunities to a diverse citizen population, continuing to meet the customer needs and serving the customers in a quality mode, remains a high priority in the department's program delivery as participation continues to grow.



The Worcester County Recreation Center in Snow Hill opened in 2005, serving recreational needs for all ages. It is the first county-owned indoor recreation facility.

Photo: Jerry Gerlitzki

The staff of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks works in concert with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Program Open Space, and the Department of Planning to ensure that programs complement the goals on the local and at state level. This relationship is based on county capital planning, land acquisition, park and facility development, and program partnerships to enhance program offerings and parks to citizens. In particular, the county has constructed a 44,000 sq. foot Recreation Center that welcomes all citizens to participate in recreational activities. In addition, the County has purchased a 574 acre parcel of land, Greys Creek Nature Park, for a new passive park with a goal of providing environmental education and to promote tourism. A provisional master plan has been completed for this new park, which will include a nature center and an interpretive hiking trail.

Funding sources in addition to Program Open Space:

Program Open Space has been a significant element in the acquisition and development of the 13 Worcester County parks and the Worcester County Recreation Center. To augment the funding received by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space, the county contributes 10% of funding to all park development projects. In the case of the Recreation Center, the county contributed over 75% of the finances to construct the facility. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources continues to supplement development projects at the Worcester County Recreation Center.

The Worcester County Commissioners are cognizant of the ongoing park expenses necessary to maintain and operate the parks. Each fiscal year the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks receives an operational appropriation that is essential to the maintenance of the 13 county parks.

Worcester County has a productive partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and, by developing this joint venture, has added the Isle of Wight Park as a leased park to Worcester County. This is an example of team work at its best which results in a natural resource that is enjoyed by thousands of citizens each year.

strives to recruit volunteers who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and will leave a positive impression on participants. Future marketing will be used to attract and entice new volunteers.

**Table II – 1. Special Events**

- Arbor Day Celebrations
- Tortoise & Hare Dare Walk
- Flick and a Float
- Tree of Life

**Special Events**

The staff of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks is responsible for “Flick and a Float.” The department host these fun-filled movie nights, throughout the summer, at different county parks. These events allow families to spend quality time with one another, while they enjoy a movie under the stars with ice cream floats and popcorn.

**Community Services Division  
Volunteers**

Volunteers are the backbone for many of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks’ programs. The volunteer program allows individuals the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise by giving back to their community. The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks

Other special events, including some conducted in collaboration with other state and county agencies, are: Arbor Day Celebration, Worcester County Fair, National Night Out Programs, and the Hare Dare Walk/Run. The Recreation Center will provide additional programs and event opportunities that allow the department to broaden its recreational offerings and continue to enhance the programs offered by the department.

**Table II-2. Programs Offered by Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks.**

PROGRAM	AGE	GENDER	CLASS	FORMAT	SEASON	CURRENT NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	CURRENT MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS
<b>YOUTH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>							
Outdoor Soccer – Pocomoke	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	76 x 12 weeks	<b>912</b>
Outdoor Soccer – Snow Hill	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	139 x 12 weeks	<b>1,668</b>
Outdoor Soccer – Berlin	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	101 x 12 weeks	<b>1,212</b>
Indoor Soccer – Pocomoke	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	68 x 12 weeks	<b>816</b>
Indoor Soccer – Snow Hill	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	147 x 12 weeks	<b>1,764</b>
Indoor Soccer – Berlin	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	77 x 12 weeks	<b>924</b>
Youth Basketball - Pocomoke	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	31 x 12 weeks	<b>372</b>

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	<b>FORMAT</b>	<b>SEASON</b>	<b>CURRENT NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>CURRENT MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS</b>
Youth Basketball – Snow Hill	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	32 x 12 weeks	<b>384</b>
Youth Basketball – Berlin	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	23 x 12 weeks	<b>276</b>
Youth Basketball – Pocomoke	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	48 x 12 weeks	<b>576</b>
Youth Basketball – Snow Hill	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	77 x 12 weeks	<b>924</b>
Youth Basketball – Berlin	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	41 x 12 weeks	<b>492</b>
Pigtail Softball - Pocomoke	7+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	26 x 12 weeks	<b>312</b>
Pigtail Softball – Snow Hill	7+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	29 x 12 weeks	<b>348</b>
Pigtail Softball – Berlin	7+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	15 x 12 weeks	<b>180</b>
Ponytail Softball – Pocomoke	11+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	30 x 12 weeks	<b>360</b>
Ponytail Softball – Snow Hill	11+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	31 x 12 weeks	<b>372</b>
Ponytail Softball – Berlin	11+	Ind/F	Sp	Si	Sp	13 x 12 weeks	<b>156</b>
Spike Express Youth Volleyball - RC	9+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F/W/Sp	97 x 12 weeks	<b>1,164</b>
Youth Volleyball League - RC	9+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	Sp	28 x 6 weeks	<b>168</b>
Toddler Gym - RC	18 – 48 months	Ind/B	So	S	W	36 x 12 weeks	<b>432</b>
Toddler Gym - RC	18 – 48 months	Ind/B	So	S	F	30 x 12 weeks	<b>360</b>
<b>AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS</b>							
After School Track - RC	9+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	W	23 x 6 weeks	<b>138</b>
After School Zone - RC	5+	Ind/B	Sp/So/A/C	S/Si	F/W/Sp	40 X 32 weeks	<b>1,280</b>
After School Dodgeball - RC	9+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	18 x 6 weeks	<b>108</b>
After School Cheerleading - RC	5+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	F	34 x 6 weeks	<b>204</b>
<b>ADULT RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>							
Men's Summer Softball – Pocomoke	16+	Team/M	Sp	C	S	110 x 12 weeks	<b>1,320</b>
Men's Fall Softball - Pocomoke	16+	Team/M	Sp	C	F	110 x 12 weeks	<b>1,320</b>
Church Softball League - Berlin	16+	Team/B	Sp	C	S	100 x 12 weeks	<b>1,200</b>
Adult Recreation Volleyball - RC	14+	Ind/B	Sp	S/Si	YR	101 x 12 weeks	<b>1,212</b>
Adult Volleyball League - RC	14+	Team/M	Sp	C	F/W/Sp	78 x 12 weeks	<b>936</b>
Adult Recreation Basketball - RC	14+	Ind/B	Sp	S/Si	YR	40 x 12 weeks	<b>480</b>
Adult Recreation Indoor Soccer – RC	14+	Ind/B	Sp	S/Si	YR	80 x 12 weeks	<b>960</b>

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	<b>FORMAT</b>	<b>SEASON</b>	<b>CURRENT NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>CURRENT MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS</b>
Adult Golf League	18+	Ind/B	Sp/So	S/Si	W/Sp	28 x 12 weeks	<b>336</b>
<b>FITNESS</b>							
Core Training - RC	18+	Ind/B	F	Si	F/W	53 x 12 weeks	<b>636</b>
After Work Fitness - RC	18+	Ind/B	F	Si	Sp/S	31 x 12 weeks	<b>372</b>
Lunch Time Fitness – RC	18+	Ind/B	F	Si	YR	35 x 12 weeks	<b>420</b>
Senior Morning Fitness – RC	45+	Ind/B	F	Si	YR	82 x 12 weeks	<b>984</b>
<b>AQUATICS</b>							
Aqua-Nuts	18+	Ind/B	F/So	So/Si	YR	83 x 12 weeks	<b>996</b>
Youth Swimming Program (3 sessions)	3+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	146 x 2 weeks	<b>292</b>
<b>SUMMER CAMPS</b>							
Baseball Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	42 x 4 days	<b>168</b>
Basketball Camp – Back to Basics	6 - 9	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	12 x 5 days	<b>60</b>
Basketball Camp – Middle School	10 – 14	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	13 x 5 days	<b>65</b>
Early Bird Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	81 x 5 days	<b>405</b>
Flag Football Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	19 x 5 days	<b>95</b>
<b>SUMMER CAMPS</b>							
Golf Camp	7 – 11	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	24 x 4 days	<b>96</b>
Recreation Sports Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	78 x 5 days	<b>390</b>
Soccer Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	58 x 5 days	<b>290</b>
Sports Combo Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	59 x 5 days	<b>295</b>
Sunset Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	72 x 5 days	<b>360</b>
Tennis Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	35 x 5 days	<b>175</b>
Track Camp	6+	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	18 x 5 days	<b>90</b>
Volleyball Camp	13 – 18	Ind/B	Sp	Si	S	36 x 5 days	<b>180</b>

**Key to abbreviations:**

**Class:** A=Arts; C=Crafts; F=Fitness; Sp=Sports; So=Social;

**Format:** S=Social; Si=Self Improvement; C=Competitive

**Gender:** F=Female; M=Male; B=Both; Ind=Individual; T=Team

**Season:** F=Fall; W=Winter; Sp=Spring; S=Summer; YR=Year Round; RC=Recreation Center

**50+ Adult Programs**

As the retired, baby boomer population continues to increase significantly in Worcester County there is a new arena of recreational experiences and programs that the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks plans to offer. According to Jeffrey Ziegler in his article “Recreating Retirement: How will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60’s”, published in the October 2002 *National Recreation & Parks Association Journal*, “boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard and they are fixated with all things youthful. This age group also favors more individualized activities rather than group events.” To meet the needs of the “boomers,” a variety of programs have been included in the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks offerings such as the individualized programs on walking, jogging, fitness programs, and aquatics. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging participation of this age group in programs and classes geared toward fitness and wellness.

Seniors continue to support recreational opportunities in Worcester County and the staff of the Department of Recreation & Parks is prepared to meet the seniors’ wellness and fitness challenges by providing a host of appropriate programs.

**Adult Programs**

Participation in adult programs has been gradually increasing in recent years. At the recreation center, the staff emphasizes program offerings and innovative marketing to attract new participation in this age group.

These offerings will include indoor soccer, softball, basketball, aquatics, volleyball, and additional programs such as walking programs and fitness. Competitive and non-competitive leagues have been incorporated as well over the past years. The goal is to meet the adults’ recreational needs and make them aware of the many life-long recreational opportunities available through the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks.

Water Exercise Classes	Volleyball Leagues
Men’s Slow Pitch Softball	Recreation Soccer
Fitness Classes	Recreation Volleyball
Walking Programs	Table Tennis
Recreation Basketball	Golf League

**Children’s Programs**

Recreational programs for children ages 18 months – 4 years will be the focus in this section. Early childhood programs in sports and socialization will provide opportunities for motor skill development, school readiness, and social development. The Worcester County Recreation Center houses new and exciting programs for children and their families. Early Childhood programs should continue to grow as the demand for recreational programs continues to increase in the county. Programming that encourages young children to develop movement and social skills will be a new arena for the department to embrace.

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks hosts a Toddler Gym program twice a year. During this program, children interact with each other providing them with necessary social time. A variety of stations,

games, and activities are provided for parents to interact with their toddlers, in order to help develop their child's motor skills.

### **Youth Programs**

The purpose of the department's sports programming is to encourage physical participation, positive sportsmanship, self-esteem and knowledge of recreational skills. Non-competitive programs for youth in pre-kindergarten through high school are currently provided to Worcester County and out-of-county residents.

A host of youth recreational programs – outdoor soccer, indoor soccer, basketball, softball, volleyball, track and field, aquatics, after school programs, and summer camps, are examples of programs currently offered at the Recreation Center.

Volunteer coaches are a necessity and serve as a basis for these programs to be provided to the children. Volunteers are selected based on knowledge of the programmatic area and the positive impact they will have on participants and the overall program. All volunteer coaches are required to have a background check completed prior to working with the youth participants. Coaches are also trained by a program manager on rules, expectations, and program goals. We also offer the volunteer coaches the opportunity to be a certified volunteer coach through the National Alliance for Youth Sports. In addition to the training, a Coach's Code of Conduct is signed by each volunteer coach. These volunteer coaches are encouraged to focus on developing a players' skill level through practice and game playing during the program. The department's philosophy of every child will play regardless of experience and

ability level is practiced in all youth sports programs. Continuing to develop a child's skill level, knowledge, sportsmanship, and self-esteem will be an ongoing objective for the department. In addition, the department also conforms with and promotes the Americans with Disabilities Act in accommodating all potential participants.

#### **Table II-4. Ages 18 months through 17 Recreation Programming**

- After School Recreation Programs
- Youth Swimming
- Youth Recreation and Sports Programs
- Summer Recreation and Sports Camps
- Track and Field
- Special Events – “Flick and a Float”
- Fitness Classes
- Toddler Gym

### **Camps**

The popularity of all-day camps is on the rise. Parents are looking for programs that will allow their child to be a part of a, structured recreational camp in a safe environment. Over the past few years, a camp schedule has been developed in order to provide parents with a multitude of time choices in order to meet their schedules.

Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks strives to offer diversity in camp offerings. These camps include Sunset Camp, Early Bird Camp, Tennis Camp, Soccer Camp, Basketball Camp, Volleyball Camp, Baseball Camp, Sports Combo Camp, Recreation

Sports Camp, Golf Camp, Track Camp, and Flag Football Camp.

The department received certification from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to conduct all-day sports camps beginning in July 2005.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available to all youth who wish to participate in the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks programs. To assist parents, legal guardians and youth the staff of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks use the criteria for financial assistance qualification that is used by the Worcester County Board of Education for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. The financial assistance has been significantly used for youth who participate in the county recreation basketball programs offered at the Recreation Center. Financial assistance has helped a number of youth who have participated in the county Youth Swimming Program that is offered at Pocomoke River State Park – Shad Landing Area each summer. The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks has a strong commitment to including all youth who wish to participate in county recreation programs.

The department implemented in 2003 a reduced fee for the second child and additional children of each family with multiple youth participants in the county recreation programs.

### **Seasonal Population Demands**

The Ocean City, national and state park beaches and Ocean City boardwalk are the primary recreational resources used by the seasonal population influx. However, additional programming, not necessarily managed by Worcester County, also fulfills the seasonal demand. The Ocean City Recreation and Parks Department offers summer camps, ocean and beach recreational programs and many special events during the summer to meet the demands of the seasonal population. Likewise, there are many summer recreational opportunities such as the numerous aquatics programs offered by the Ocean Pines Recreation & Parks Department.

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks is host to several spring, summer and fall softball tournaments at Showell Park located in the northern part of the county.

Additionally a number of county youth summer recreational camps are offered at the Worcester County Recreation Center and a park in the growth population area of the county, Northern Worcester Athletic Complex.

### **Program Open Space and County Investment in Worcester County Municipalities**

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks is cognizant of the importance of open space throughout the municipalities and has tried on a yearly basis to allocate funds to each municipality for park land acquisition and development.

**Table II-5. Recreational Facilities and Access in Ocean Pines**

<u>Recreational Facility</u>	<u>Use Requirements</u>
Tennis Courts	Associate Membership Fee Required
Paddleball Courts	Associate Membership Fee Required
Swimming Pools	Associate Membership Fee Required or Guest
Parks	Open to Public
Bike Paths	Open to Public
Marina	Must be an Ocean Pines Property Owner
Baseball/Softball Fields	Not Available to Non-Residents unless participating in league for Non-Residents
Basketball Courts	Open to Public
Golf Course	Associate Membership Fee Required or Guest
Playgrounds	Open to Public

However, the significant reduction in POS appropriations over the past three years has also resulted in no appropriations to the municipalities. The County has encouraged the municipalities to take advantage of the Community Parks & Playground Grants.

Over the past few years the municipalities have taken advantage of the Community Parks & Playground Grants. This has resulted in a multitude of open space park lands and park development projects for Worcester County citizens.

The Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks Director presents the municipalities and the County’s Program Open Space Annual Program and their request for funding to the Worcester County Recreation & Parks Advisory Board members. The Advisory Board then makes recommendations for funding allocations to the Worcester County Commissioners. The commissioners make the final decision on the allocations for the County and the municipality park improvement allocations.

While the Ocean Pines Association parks are not funded by the County as

Ocean Pines is not an incorporated municipality, Ocean Pines has a multitude of recreational facilities. These include a community center, tennis courts, paddleball courts, swimming pools, parks, bike paths, a marina, baseball/softball fields, basketball courts, a golf course and playgrounds. Some facilities are open to the public. Other amenities have use requirements, which are described in the table above.

**Needs Analysis and County Priorities For Land, Facilities & Rehabilitation**

A needs analysis was conducted to identify county priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation. The needs analysis is an evaluation which estimates the amount of land and facilities needed to satisfy demand for recreational activities.

This section of Chapter II includes:

- Supply: An inventory of lands and facilities currently available.
- Demand: An assessment and estimates of public demand for specific recreational activities.
- Needs Determination: A determination of needs for additional land and facilities.

- County priorities: Identification of priorities for land acquisition, facility development, and rehabilitation designed to meet the needs identified.

## Supply

An inventory of the lands and facilities available to support specific recreational activities was updated to determine the supply. This information was obtained from the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreational Sites (MEIRS), which is a statewide database of recreational sites that is maintained by the Maryland Department of Planning with assistance from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Worcester County is responsible for entering all lands and facilities maintained or leased by the county, or its municipalities, into this database. DNR maintains the inventory of state recreational lands and facilities. This information is then used to generate summaries of available open space lands as well as athletic fields and other types of facilities.

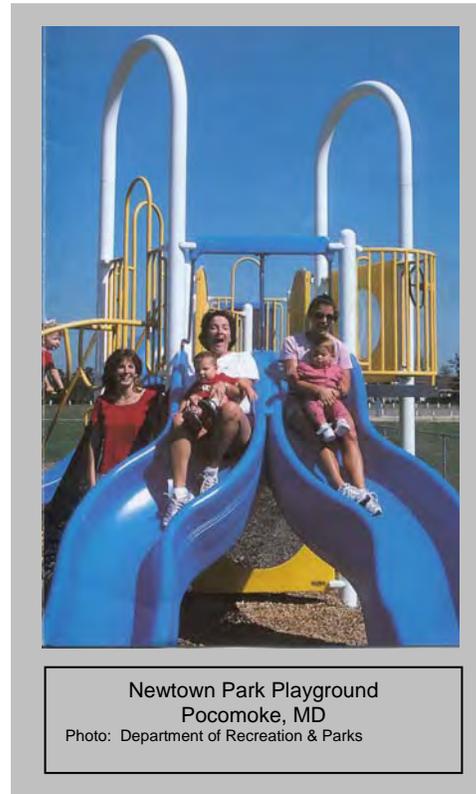
Tables II-12, A – D, provided at the end of this chapter, is a list of all recreational lands and facilities maintained or leased in the county or municipalities that help meet demand for recreational activity. This inventory was developed under the guidelines of the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreational Sites (MEIRS) system, the official reporting mechanism for county and state inventories of supply of recreational lands.

Table II-6 provides information about supply or “carrying capacity” of

existing, key recreational facilities and programming in the county.

## MEIRS Update Strategy

The MEIRS inventory updates, both Web and Geographic Information System (GIS) -based, are conducted annually in cooperation with the Department of Development Review and Permitting.



**TABLE II-6: Existing Recreational Programming and Facilities in Worcester County**

Activity	Facility Types	Number of Facilities	Season Length	Daily Carrying Capacity per Facility	Annual Carrying Capacity per Facility	Total Supply All Facilities
Baseball/Softball						
	Ball diamond	24	210	58	12,180	292,320
	Ball diamond, Lighted	18	210	106	22,260	400,680
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY BASEBALL/SOFTBALL</b>		<b>42</b>			<b>34,440</b>	<b>693,000</b>
Field Sports						
	Multipurpose Fields	32	210	75	15,750	504,000
	Multipurpose, Lighted	6	210	123	25,830	154,980
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY FIELD SPORTS</b>		<b>38</b>			<b>41,580</b>	<b>658,980</b>
Court Sports						
	Basketball	21	180	57	10,260	215,460
	Tennis	60	210	7	1,470	88,200
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY COURT SPORTS</b>		<b>81</b>			<b>11,730</b>	<b>303,660</b>
Indoor Recreation Areas						
	Recreation Centers	2	365	833	304,045	608,090
	School Gymnasiums	12	365	300	109,500	1,314,000
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY INDOOR RECREATION AREAS</b>		<b>14</b>			<b>413,545</b>	<b>1,922,090</b>

**Worcester County Parks**

Worcester County has three distinct areas of concentrated development. A network of parks situated throughout the county has been created to serve these areas. Worcester County currently has thirteen parks in its inventory.

**Northern Worcester County**

The northern portion of Worcester County is the planned primary future growth area in Worcester County, as illustrated on Figure II – 1 and Figure II - 2. This area includes Ocean City, Ocean Pines, and Berlin. Intensive residential and commercial development in northern Worcester County is threatening to deny citizens adequate access to the waterfront for fishing and passive recreation. The county recognizes the importance of acquiring waterfront property so that bay access will be available for all citizens.

A newly acquired parcel of land in 2006 will eventually be opened as Greys Creek Nature Park. This will be a passive park with the following amenities: a canoe/kayak launch, nature trails, and an environmental education center. Information will be displayed in this park for people to learn about the surrounding environment and how important it is to preserve it for future generations. A provisional master plan for this park has recently been completed.

Worcester County created two new waterfront parks in 2004. Homer Gudelsky Park and the Isle of Wight Nature Park are the newest parks to be dedicated and open to serve the public. Homer Gudelsky Park is a 1-acre parcel of sandy beach located at the end of Route 707, Old Bridge Road, in West Ocean City. The land is adjacent to the Ocean City Inlet on the Sinepuxent Bay. This location affords a spectacular vista of natural features as well as the Harry

Kelley Memorial Bridge. An ongoing beach replenishment program has been established for this park, as sand dredged from the Shantytown Channel will be pumped on an annual basis onto the property at an approximate rate of 10,000 cubic yards annually. In the future the department hopes to explore the installation of an ADA accessible boardwalk at Homer Gudelsky Park.

The Isle of Wight Nature Park is a twelve-acre wildlife sanctuary. With observation piers and an area to launch canoes, this park offers opportunity for both wildlife appreciation and protection. Located at the intersection of Route 90 and Saint Martins Neck Road, in Bishopville, visitors can view both the Isle of Wight Bay and the mouth of the Saint Martin River. Formerly a part of the Isle of Wight Wildlife Management Area, creation of this park was a joint project of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and Worcester County.

In addition to Homer Gudelsky Park and the Isle of Wight Nature Park, the Herring Creek Nature Park provides a natural, bayfront setting for passive recreation, including a frog pond, a wildflower meadow, a grassy knoll and wooded trails.

Showell Park in Showell, provides a softball/baseball complex while Northern Worcester Athletic Complex in Berlin, provides softball/baseball as well as soccer/lacrosse fields and a football field. In the future the department hopes to develop more ball fields and parking areas, at these two parks. The department also desires to develop fitness trails within the four large county parks, which includes Northern

Worcester Athletic Complex and Showell Park. Two neighborhood parks, in Bishopville and Whaleyville provide satellite services to outlying communities.

Beach replenishment and regular channel dredging are key to maintaining the recreational benefits of the ocean and the bays in northern Worcester County. Worcester County continues to work with multiple state and federal agencies to ensure adequate maintenance of beaches and boating access.

### **Central Worcester County**

The Worcester County Recreation Center at John Walter Smith Park, located in Snow Hill opened July 2005. With the recreation center, the central part of the county serves the local population while also drawing visitors from the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Delaware. The 36,000 square foot gymnasium provides a home for indoor track, soccer, basketball, volleyball, and other sports. In addition, the recreation center is the central administrative base for the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks. A sports complex at this location and a neighborhood park in Newark, Maryland, also provide recreational resources to the citizens in the central part of Worcester County.

A newly acquired parcel of land in the Central part of Worcester County will eventually open as Girdletree Park. This will be a neighborhood park where the goal will be to include a playground, pavilion, and picnic tables. The proposed park falls within the limits of the established community and can easily be reached with a minimal walk or bicycle ride.

## Southern Worcester County

Newtown Park is a 58-acre parcel of land developed as an athletic complex to serve the citizens of Worcester County in the southern end of the county. One highlight of Newtown Park is an abandoned gravel pit that now serves as a scenic pond. Citizens use Newtown Park as a passive park for fishing, walking or jogging, as well for the recreational programs. Additionally, a plan is being developed to create a bike trail system along this picturesque pond. To aid Newtown Park in supporting the southern section of the county, a neighborhood park in Stockton is available to citizens.

## Playgrounds

Several playgrounds in Worcester County parks have been revitalized in recent years. All new playgrounds must meet or exceed Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. In addition to meeting CPSC guidelines and ASTM standards, all new installations are required to meet the accessibility standards set by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Currently, all eight playgrounds have had new equipment installed. Three of these installations were funded with Community Parks and Playground grant funds, while the remaining five were funded by Program Open Space along with Worcester County funds.

## Local Needs for Recreational Lands and Facilities

Local needs for recreational lands and facilities were determined through the

use of a needs analysis. This analysis was an evaluation which estimated the amount of land and facilities needed (supply), over and above those currently available, to satisfy the demand for recreational opportunities in Worcester County through the year 2020. The needs analysis was based on several sources of information:

- The results of a statewide survey.
- The results of a local users survey.
- Population and demographic projections.
- Input from the public through programs administered by the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks as well as other user organizations.

## Demand

Total demand for recreational facilities was estimated through the use of a recreation demand survey, *Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland*<sup>1</sup>. Table II-7 provides an analysis of demand for recreational facilities and programming in Worcester County.

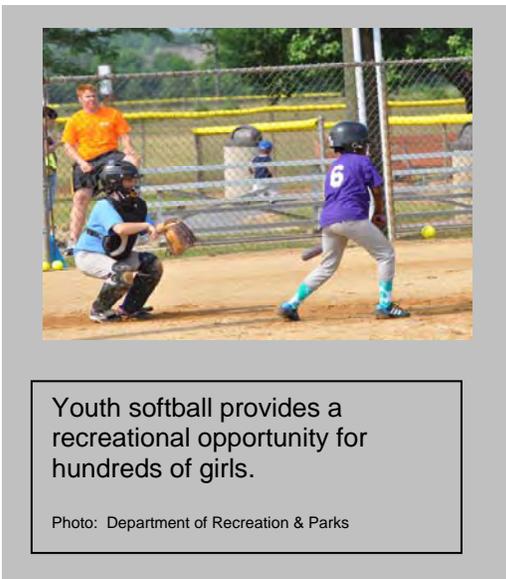
This survey is a collection of information from citizens across Maryland regarding their levels of recreation activity. For the purposes of analysis for this plan, these survey results were supplemented with local user surveys, as well as interaction and experience with participants in local recreational programs, and other local recreation statistics to determine a

---

<sup>1</sup> Norris, Donald, et al. 2003. "Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland." Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources.

baseline demand for programming and facilities.

It is recognized that the growing number of citizens 50 plus years of age will place new demands on the recreation and parks programming and facilities in coming years. While no survey of this group has been conducted for the purposes of this plan, it is believed that demands will be addressed with the many new programs described earlier in this chapter that will be provided using existing facilities.



### Needs Determination

Table II-8 provides a comparison of selected, available recreational facilities to the demand for selected, recreational facilities.

Needs were calculated based on population projections for the years 2010

and 2015. Population projections for the year 2022 were used to determine long-range (2016 and beyond) needs. Table II-9 indicates that Worcester County has exceeded the demand for facilities and programming in baseball/softball, field sports, basketball and tennis currently, and it is projected that needs will be met for these activities through to 2022.

While analysis of other recreational facilities and programming needs was not conducted, it is believed that the Town of Ocean City and Ocean Pines meet the residual demands for recreational opportunities for the permanent and seasonal residents in the northern section of Worcester County. The Mid-Delmarva YMCA in Pocomoke City, Maryland, bolsters the supply of recreational facilities in the southern section of the county. In addition, the Worcester County Public School system collaborates with the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks to provide recreational opportunities.

### Summary of Surpluses and Deficiencies

Based on the needs analysis performed, as well as a review of the county inventory of parks and programming, Worcester County has exceeded county residences' demand for athletic fields and facilities through 2022.

**TABLE II-7 Demand for Recreational Facilities and Programming in Worcester County.**

Activity	Current Population*	Participati on Rate	Frequency Rate	Current Demand	2012 Population	2012 Demand	2017 Population	2017 Demand	2022 Population	2022 Demand
Baseball	51,454	2.20%	5.85	6,622	52,650	6,776	55,300	7,117	57,350	7,381
Softball	51,454	1.41%	5.86	4,221	52,650	4,350	55,300	4,569	57,350	4,739
<b>TOTAL BASEBALL – SOFTBALL DEMAND</b>				<b>10,843</b>		<b>11,126</b>		<b>11,686</b>		<b>12,120</b>
Soccer	51,454	2.28%	5.20	6,100	52,650	6,242	55,300	6,556	57,350	6,799
Football	51,454	1.67%	3.85	3,308	52,650	3,385	55,300	3,556	57,350	3,687
Lacrosse	51,454	0.33%	8.66	1,470	52,650	1,505	55,300	1,580	57,350	1,639
Field Hockey	51,454	0.28%	8.43	1,215	52,650	1,243	55,300	1,305	57,350	1,354
<b>TOTAL FIELD SPORTS DEMAND</b>				<b>12,093</b>		<b>12,375</b>		<b>12,997</b>		<b>13,479</b>
Basketball	51,454	3.01%	5.59	8,658	52,650	8,859	55,300	9,305	57,350	9,650
<b>TOTAL BASKETBALL DEMAND</b>				<b>8,658</b>		<b>8,859</b>		<b>9,305</b>		<b>9,650</b>
Tennis	51,454	1.47%	3.28	2,481	52,650	2,539	55,300	2,666	57,350	2,765
<b>TOTAL TENNIS DEMAND</b>				<b>2,481</b>		<b>2,539</b>		<b>2,666</b>		<b>2,765</b>

**TABLE II-8: Needs Analysis of Recreational Facilities and Programming in Worcester County.**

Activity	Current Supply	Annual Carrying Capacity	Current Demand	Current Unmet Need	2012 Demand	2012 Unmet Demand	2012 Unmet Need	2017 Demand	2017 Unmet Demand	2017 Unmet Need	2022 Demand	2022 Unmet Demand	2022 Unmet Need
Baseball/Softball	631,008	16,605	10,843	N/A	11,126	N/A	N/A	11,686	N/A	N/A	12,120	N/A	N/A
Field Sports	710,976	18,710	12,093	N/A	12,375	N/A	N/A	12,997	N/A	N/A	13,479	N/A	N/A
Basketball	264,576	10,176	8,658	N/A	8,859	N/A	N/A	9,305	N/A	N/A	9,650	N/A	N/A
Tennis	90,720	1,512	2,481	N/A	2,539	N/A	N/A	2,666	N/A	N/A	2,765	N/A	N/A

Note: Population data based on current census information and MDP projections made in November 2010.

**Table II-9. Priority Renovation Projects by Individual Facility**

<b>Park Name-Project</b>	<b>Projected Cost</b>	<b>Development</b>
<b>Berlin Rubble Fill</b>	<b>Berlin Rubble Fill</b>	<b>Type</b>
a. Conversion to Nature Park	\$3,000,000	New
<b>Bishopville Park</b>	<b>Bishopville</b>	
a. Tennis Courts	\$200,000	New
b. Bike Racks	\$500	New
<b>Girdletree Park</b>	<b>Girdletree</b>	
a. Development and Construction of Park and Playground	\$150,000	New
<b>Greys Creek Nature Park</b>		
a. Nature Trail & Canoe/Kayak Launch	\$100,000	New
b. Environmental Education Center & Pavilion	\$400,000	New
c. Additional Land Acquisition	\$1,500,000	New
d. Soft Shoreline and Bulkhead Renovation	\$5,555	New
<b>Homer Gudelsky Park</b>	<b>Home Gudelsky</b>	
a. Bike Racks	\$500	New
<b>JWS Park</b>	<b>JWS Park</b>	
a. Maintenance/Storage Building(s)	\$334,000	New
b. Roof Replacement on Park Office and Shop	\$8,889	Replacement
c. Fencing replacement	\$100,000	Replacement
d. Soccer Field Lighting	\$6,667	Upgrades
e. Field Lighting	\$250,000	Replacement
<b>Newtown Park</b>	<b>Newtown Park</b>	
a. Maintenance/Storage Building	\$20,000	New
b. Pavilion Roof Replacement	\$5,555	Replacement
c. Fencing	\$100,000	Replacement
d. Reforestation, Rain Garden, and Planting Project	\$7,500	New
e. Fitness Trail and Picnic Area	\$10,000	New
<b>Northern Worcester Athletic Complex</b>	<b>NWAC</b>	
a. Drainage/Landscaping	\$130,000	New
b. Parking	\$75,000	New
<b>Showell Park</b>	<b>Showell Park</b>	
a. Maintenance/Storage Building	\$20,000	New
b. Concession stand/bathrooms	\$120,000	New
c. Additional Land Acquisition	\$4,500,000	New
<b>Whaleyville Park</b>	<b>Whaleyville</b>	
a. Pavilion Addition	\$40,000	New
<b>Worcester County Recreation Center</b>	<b>WCRC</b>	
a. Gymnasium Floor Repair	\$22,222	Upgrades
b. Landscaping Improvements	\$5,555	Upgrades
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,111,943</b>	

## **County Priorities in Land Acquisition, Facility Development, and Rehabilitation**

Worcester County's priorities over the next five years will be the acquisition of recreational land in northern Worcester County, as well as an emphasis on modernizing and updating existing facilities.

The county's top twelve needs for the next six years are:

1. Acquisition of additional recreational land in northern Worcester County
2. Adequate maintenance and storage facilities
3. Drainage improvements
4. Parking areas
5. Field lighting upgrades
6. Tennis court resurfacing
7. Fencing renovations
8. Field renovations
9. Dugout renovations
10. Completion of amenities to two new county parks
11. Playground upgrades/replacements
12. Trails

Table II-9 (previous page) presents priority renovation projects. These are listed in alphabetical order by facility name, not in order of priority.

### **Funds Needed to Sustain Recreational Lands and Facilities**

The Worcester County Commissioners have displayed a strong commitment to Worcester County parks, acquisition of

park lands, and facilities. Based on annual park expenses, allocations of approximately \$200,000 - \$400,000 have been sufficient in helping to sustain the county's parks and facilities. The strong commitment to parks maintenance and park improvements by the Worcester County Commissioners has been a long-standing benefit in the areas of park land acquisition and development.

It is important to note that acquisition of additional recreational land, identified as a high-priority need, requires additional financial and human resources as well as equipment, supplies and materials.

### **Acquisition (Acreage) Goal**

An analysis of local recreational acreage was conducted using the state-default analysis method; the methodology and results are provided in Appendix II. Essentially, the state-default goal is a minimum of 30 acres of recreational land per 1,000 residents. The state-default analysis indicates that there is an approximately 8,000-acre surplus of recreational land serving the citizens of Worcester County. However, there is a need for additional public recreational land in the northern part of the county where the population growth is expected to continue to escalate, and the population swells seasonally.

Since the last *Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* was written additional public recreational land in the northern part of the county, Greys Creek Nature Park and Ayers Creek/Holly Grove Swamp Phase II, was acquired, along with Girdletree Park in the central part of the county. These three parcels of land are still in the planning stage and are not currently open to the public.

Greys Creek Nature Park will be a passive nature park, which will include a canoe/kayak launch, a pavilion and picnic tables, interpretative nature trails, and an environmental education center.

“Ayers Creek/Holly Grove Swamp Phase II is a 420 acre contiguous coastal plan forest block. The State of Maryland received a federal grant to acquire land within this area to transfer to the ownership of Worcester County with the Maryland Coastal Bays Foundation serving as the manager of the property. The property is to be protected in perpetuity as a nature reserve in accordance with the conditions and restriction contained in the deed to the County for the property, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Final Guidelines, June 2003, as updated from time to time and the federal CELCP grant award. The park land property will protect principal habitats of concern in Maryland’s Coastal Bay as each of the key habitats on the property plays a valuable role toward maintaining the ecological integrity of the area’s intricate hydrological system. These habitats include the sensitive shoreline, palustrine and estuarine wetlands and adjacent coastal upland forest areas. To maintain the ecological integrity of the property and the region, the acquisition of this property will protect one of the largest most ecologically valuable, unprotected forest parcels in the Ayers Creek area.”

Reference: Memorandum of Understanding Ayers Creek/Holly Grove Swamp Phase II Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) FY 2010 Award

Girdletree Park will eventually be opened in the central part of the county and it will be a neighborhood park,

which will include a pavilion and picnic tables, and a playground.

It is also important to begin to explore linking county parks with other public recreational lands through waterway, hiking and biking trails, as such a network would provide substantial recreational, aesthetic and wildlife benefits.

### **15 Year Capital Improvement Program**

Worcester County has momentous commitment to preserving park and recreation land along with facility development and rehabilitation projects for all citizens and visitors to the county. There are prime ecological properties to explore and consider which could enhance the natural resources of the county park systems. We will need to be diligent by locating land that will provide positive recreational impacts for towns, communities, and the environment so that the quality of life that is currently enjoyed in this rural county along the Atlantic Ocean is enjoyed by future generations to come.

A 15-year capital improvement program for park land acquisition and recreational facility development is illustrated in Table II – 10 and Table II – 11. As noted on Table II – 10 the short range goals address the preservation of ecologically significant property along Maryland’s Coastal Bays. This will be important in protecting significant coastal habitat and eliminating the threat of residential and commercial development on a property that sits at the center of one of the most biologically diverse areas in the Mid-Atlantic region. Preservation of this tract provides an extraordinary opportunity to preserve

natural habitat, safeguard wildlife habitat, and protect the water quality of the Assawoman Bay. The property contains upland coastal forest and extensive sensitive non-tidal and tidal saltwater wetlands.

The short, mid-term, and long range capital improvements as listed on Table II-10 and Table II – 11 address a myriad of developmental and rehabilitation projects for the near term through 2022 and beyond. While exploring developmental projects, great care will be taken to ensure that the projects are sustainable and balance the environment and available resources.

**TABLE II – 10. Acquisition and Development Recommendations**

Project	Location	Description of Land Preservation and Recreation Recommendation	Estimated Total Cost	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Short-Range (2012) Cost			Estimated Mid-Range (2017) Cost			Estimated Long-Range (2022) Cost		
					Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation
Greys Creek Nature Park	Bishopville, MD	Educational Center and Passive Park	\$500,000			\$500,000							
Greys Creek Nature Park	Bishopville, MD	Land Acquisition	\$1,500,000	5-10	\$1,500,000								
Girdletree Park	Girdletree, MD	New Community Park Development	\$150,000			\$150,000							
Berlin Rubble Fill	Berlin, MD	New Park Development	\$3,000,000					\$3,000,000					
Bishopville Park	Bishopville, MD	Tennis Ammenity Development	\$200,000					\$200,000					
John Walter Smith Park	Snow Hill, MD	Maint. Facility Construction	\$334,000					\$334,000					
John Walter Smith Park	Snow Hill, MD	Field Fencing Replacement	\$100,000							\$100,000			
John Walter Smith Park	Snow Hill, MD	Field Lighting Replacement	\$250,000							\$250,000			
John Walter Smith Park	Snow Hill, MD	Playground Upgrade	\$100,000										\$100,000
Newtown Park	Pocomoke, MD	Field Fencing Replacement	\$100,000							\$100,000			
Newtown Park	Pocomoke, MD	Playground Upgrade	\$100,000										\$100,000
Northern Worcester Athletic Complex	Berlin, MD	Parking, Drainage and Landscaping	\$205,000						\$205,000				
Northern Worcester Athletic Complex	Berlin, MD	Field Fencing Replacement	\$100,000							\$100,000			
Showell Park Expansion	Showell, MD	Land Acquisition	\$4,500,000	80				\$4,500,000					
Showell Park	Showell, MD	Concession/Bathroom Construction	\$120,000						\$120,000				
Showell Park	Showell, MD	Field Fencing Replacement	\$100,000							\$100,000			
Stockton Park	Stockton, MD	Playground Upgrade	\$100,000										\$100,000

**TABLE II – 11. State Goals Met by Acquisition and Development Recommendations**

Project	Short-Range	Mid-Range	Long-Range	State Goal(s) Met (1-6)	Local Goal(s) Met (7-14)	Notes
Greys Creek Nature Park/ Educational Center and Passive Park	Yes			1,2,6	7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14	All of these projects address several of the state and local goals. In terms of state goals, in addition to enhancing recreational opportunities, which make our state a more desirable place to live, the projects consider convenience for population centers and areas that are anticipated to grow. In addition, where project selection is concerned, a proactive attempt to protect open space and resource lands has been factored in as part of the review process.
Greys Creek Nature Park / Land Acquisition	Yes			4,5	7,8,9,10,11,13	
Girdletree Park/New Community Park Development	Yes			1,2,4	7,8,9,10,11,,14	
Berlin Rubble Fill/New Park Development		Yes		1,2	7,8,10,11,13	
Bishopville Park /Tennis Amenity Development		Yes		1,2,	7,8,9,10,11,13	
John Walter Smith Park/Maint. Facility Construction		Yes		1,2	7,10,11,13,14	
John Walter Smith Park /Field Fencing Replacement		Yes		1,2	7,10,11,13	
John Walter Smith Park/Field Lighting Replacement		Yes		1,2	7,10,11,13	
John Walter Smith Park/Playground Upgrade			Yes	1,2	7,10,11,13	
Newtown Park /Field Fencing Replacement		Yes		1,2	7,8,10,11,13	
Newtown Park/Playground Upgrade			Yes	1,2	7,8,10,11,13	
Northern Worcester Athletic Complex/Parking, Drainage and Landscaping		Yes		1,2,5	7,8,10,11,13,14	
Northern Worcester Athletic Complex/Field Fencing Replacement		Yes		1,2	7,8,10,11,13	
Showell Park Expansion/Land Acquisition		Yes		1,2,6	7,8,10,11,13	
Showell Park/Concession/Bathroom Construction		Yes		1,2	7,10,11,13	
Showell Park/Field Fencing Replacement		Yes		1,2	7,10,11,13	
Stockton Park/Playground Upgrade			Yes	1,2	7,9,10,11,14	From the local goal perspective, great care has been taken to ensure development occurs in suitable areas where sensitive resources can be and are protected. Furthermore, environmental stewardship is emphasized, which includes a practice where a reduction in resource consumption is emphasized on an ongoing basis. Finally, great care has been taken to initiate projects in areas where growth is expected to occur and in a way that complies with the requirements pursuant to available funding mechanisms.

**State Goals**

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
2. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, 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.

**Local Goals**

The Local Goals for Worcester County are the “eight visions listed below which were established by the state of Maryland’s General Assembly first with the Planning Act in 1992.”

7. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
8. Sensitive areas are protected.
9. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources areas are protected.
10. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
11. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is practiced.
12. To assure the achievement of 7 through 11 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
13. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under control of the county or municipal corporations are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.
14. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve this policy.

## Public Participation

There were several opportunities for public participation in the *Worcester County 2012 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*. Opportunities for the public to review and respond to the draft were provided by:

### *Public Meetings*

- The draft was provided to the Worcester County Recreation & Parks Advisory Board for review, response and recommendations. The advisory board members represent the constituents from the seven districts in Worcester County.
- The Worcester County Planning Commission conducted a meeting in which the *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* was reviewed. The Commission provided feedback and proposals.
- The draft plan was reviewed by the Worcester County Commissioners and a 60- day review was provided for their proposals and modifications.

### *Public Access to the Draft*

- The draft plan was placed in all public libraries for review and input from the Worcester County citizens.
- The internet was an avenue used for the posting of draft plan. This provided citizens the opportunity to electronically respond with feedback concerning the plan.

### *Meetings with Municipalities*

- A draft was sent to all county municipalities for review and feedback. These municipalities have benefit from the POS allocations that have been awarded to them from Worcester County.
- Due to the major decrease in POS appropriations to all counties in 2009, it has been determined by Worcester County officials to encourage the municipalities to submit an application for the Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space Community Parks and Playground Grants for park funding. All four municipalities have utilized this avenue as a source to apply for park and playground funding.

### *Recreation Program Surveys*

Since the *1998 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* was completed, the recreation and parks staff have solicited input through the use of program surveys. This public feedback has guided program direction.

The staff of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks conducts programmatic surveys at the conclusion of each recreation program. The survey includes demographic information, marketing, registration, program organization and administration, facilities based on playing space, cleanliness, spectator comfort, staff member preparation and professional behavior, and overall evaluation for participant satisfaction/reception. There is also a survey section included for additional comments and suggestions.

Since the opening of the Worcester County Recreation Center (Center) on July 11, 2005, the staff has used a sign-in procedure for all visitors to the Center. This procedure affords every visitor the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions regarding the Center, programs, and parks. It also allows us to see how many participants are coming to the Center for each activity.

The information solicited from the citizens and collected from these surveys is used as a tool to provide direction for future recreational programs, facilities, and parks.

### **Recommendations**

The proposed recommendations recognize the importance of accountability of the county comprehensive plan, recreation and park's goals and how they work in concert with the State recreation and parks goals.

Recommendations specifically for parks, recreational programs, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space include the following:

- Funding for acquisition of park lands to be preserved to protect natural open spaces for all citizens to enjoy;
- Funding for parks to be sustained at the current level will require annual funding in the average amount of \$300,000 to advance with major park projects will necessitate \$400,000 - \$600,000 annually;
- Funding for recreational programs will need to be in the

\$80,000 range for the current programmatic areas.

- Measurement of park and programmatic expenditures, revenue, participant numbers, and the economic impact will play a part in the approach that is used to secure the funding and staffing. Grants that are park and programmatic appropriate will be explored based on staff resources to realistically write and implement a grant. Support of Program Open Space (POS) and the continued efforts to see that the POS funds are sufficient for the state, counties, and municipalities will be an on-going goal for the staff of the Worcester County Department of Recreation & Parks.
- The county should initiate or participate in dredging and navigation plans for the coastal bays, recognizing that maintaining channels for recreational use provides economic and recreational benefits to citizens.
- The county should begin to pursue creation of bike/walking trails and connectivity between public lands for the long-term (beyond 2022).

Contributing to the fitness and wellness of Worcester County citizens of all ages will continue to be a focus for the Worcester County Department of

Recreation & Parks. Working in partnership with county and state agencies such as the Worcester County Health Department and the Worcester County Human Resources Department will provide the opportunity to enhance this goal.

Strategically utilize the quality natural resources of the Worcester County parks and the Worcester County Recreation Center to enhance the amenities for all citizens who live and visit the Worcester County villages and towns and the State of Maryland.

This plan supports continued goals of conservation of open space lands for this generation and for future generations to come. Sustainability of the quality of leisurely pursuits and land preservation for recreational opportunities for all citizens is a continued goal that will be matched with a rate that exceeds the rate that land is developed at the county and the statewide level.

Table II-12A. Privately Owned Recreation Sites, Worcester County

Site Name	City/Town	Site Class	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Group Campsites	Tent/RV Campsites	Canoeing/kayaking, Mileage	Basketball Courts	Skateboard Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ball Fields, Diamond	Lighted Ball Fields, Diamond	Multipurpose Fields	Lighted Multipurpose Fields	Picnic Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Indoor Recreational Areas	Swimming Pools	Tot Lots	Bike Trails, Mileage	Hiking Trails, Mileage
Bainbridge Park	Berlin	Community Park												1						1		
Bali Hi RV Park, Inc.	Bishopville	Special Use Area				178		2			1			1		1	25			1		
Bay Club Golf Course	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Beach Club Golf Links	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Bog Iron Water Trail	Snow Hill	Water Trail					4															
Ocean Downs	Berlin	Special Use Area																				
Eagle's Nest Campground	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Fort Whaley	Whaleyville	Special Use Area				167										1				2		
Frontier Town	Berlin	Special Use Area				584										2				1		
Furnace Town Historic Site	Snow Hill	Historic/Cultural Area														1	24					1
Huntington Park	Berlin	Neighborhood Park										1								1		
Jolly Roger Amusement Park	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
The Linds at Lighthouse Sound Golf Course	Bishopville	Golf Course Only																				
Manklin Meadows Tennis Complex	Berlin	Neighborhood Park						1		12			1				4					
Marty's Playland	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Nassawango Country Club	Pocomoke City	Special Use Area		4													8					
Nassawango Creek Preserve	Snow Hill	Other Public Land					3															
North Gate Pond (Ocean Pines)	Berlin	Other Public Land																				
Ocean City Golf Club	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Ocean Pines Golf Course and Country Club	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Ocean Pines Swim and Racquet Club	Berlin	Community Park		22				1		4						1	12					
Ocean Pines Yacht Club	Berlin	Special Use Area	1	86																		
Ocean Pines--"Pocket" Parks (18 total)	Berlin	Mini-Park																				
Ocean Pines--Robin Hood Park	Berlin	Mini-Park															3			1		
Ocean Pines--South Gate Pond	Berlin	Community Park																				
Pine Shore Golf Course North	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Pine Shore Golf Course South	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Porter's Crossing Canoe Trail	Snow Hill	Water Trail					5.5															
River Run Golf Club	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Rum Pointe Seaside Golf Links	Berlin	Golf Course Only																				
Somerset Park	Berlin	Community Park												1			1				1	
White Horse Park	Berlin	Neighborhood Park	1					1			2					1					1	
Worcester Preparatory School	Berlin	School								4				3							1	
<b>Total</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Table II-12B. County-owned Recreation Sites, Worcester County

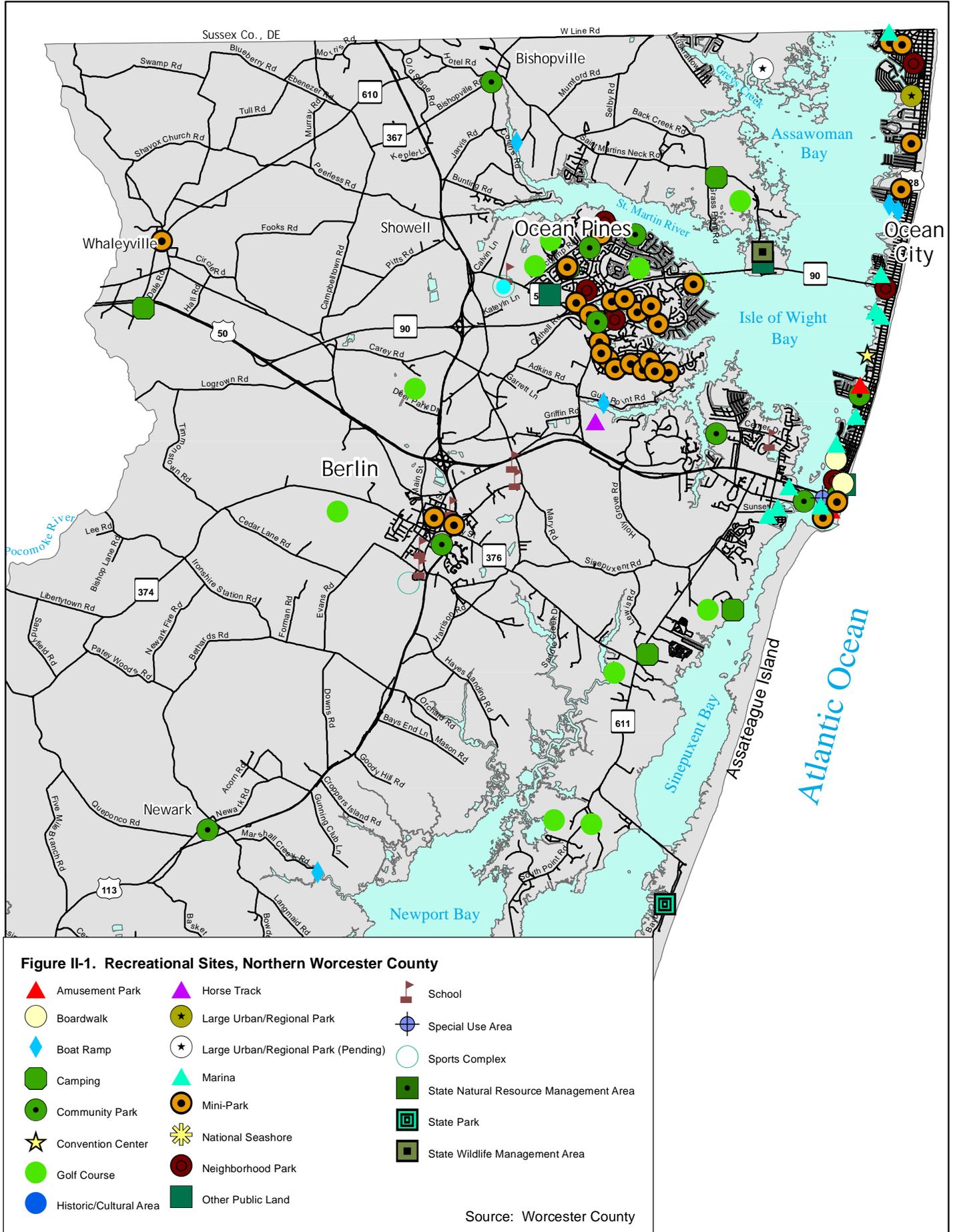
Site Name	City/Town	Site Class	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Group Campsites	Tent/RV Campsites	Canoeing/kayaking, Mileage	Basketball Courts	Skateboard Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ball Fields, Diamond	Lighted Ball Fields, Diamond	Multipurpose Fields	Lighted Multipurpose Fields	Picnic Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Indoor Recreational Areas	Swimming Pools	Tot Lots	Bike Trails, Mileage	Hiking Trails, Mileage
Bering Road Boat Ramp	Ocean City	Special Use Area	2																			
Berlin Intermediate School	Berlin	School								2				2				1		1		
Bird Road Farm	Girdletree	Special Use Area																				
Bishopville Park	Bishopville	Community Park										1				1	9			1		
Buckingham Elementary School	Berlin	School												1		1	4	1		2		
Cedar Chapel Special School	Snow Hill	School						1											1	1		
Cedar Hall Wharf	Pocomoke City	Special Use Area	2																			
Downtown Recreation Complex	Ocean City	Neighborhood Park						2	1	2		1	1							1		
George Island Landing	Stockton	Special Use Area	1																			
Girdletree Park	Girdletree	Community Park																				
Greys Creek Nature Park	Bishopville	Community Park																				
Gum Point Landing	Berlin	Special Use Area	1																			
Herring Creek Nature Park	Ocean City	Community Park														1	2					1
Homer Gudelsky Park	Ocean City	Community Park																				
Isle of Wight Park	Bishopville	Other Public Land															5					
John Walter Smith Park	Snow Hill	Sports Complex						2		2	1	7	3	7	2	1	11	1		1		
Mason Landing	Newark	Special Use Area	1																			
Newark Park	Newark	Community Park									1	1				1	4				1	
Newtown Park	Pocomoke City	Sports Complex									1	3	3	2	1	1	10			1		
Northern Worcester Athletic Complex	Berlin	Sports Complex										3	2	4	1	1	15			1		
Ocean City Elementary School	Ocean City	School																1		2		
Pocomoke Elementary School	Pocomoke City	School					1				1							1		1		
Pocomoke High School	Pocomoke City	School					1			4		1	1	2	1			1		1		
Pocomoke Middle School	Pocomoke City	School								2				1				1		1		
Public Landing	Snow Hill	Special Use Area	1																			
Shell Mill Landing	Bishopville	Special Use Area	2																			
Showell Elementary School	Showell	School						2						1		2		1		3		
Showell Park	Showell	Sports Complex								2		1	2			1	8			2		
Snow Hill Elementary School	Snow Hill	School												1				1		2		
Snow Hill High School	Snow Hill	School								4		2	1					1				
Snow Hill Middle School	Snow Hill	School						1		2				1			1	1		1		
South Point Landing	Berlin	Special Use Area																				
Stephen Decatur Middle School	Berlin	School																1				
Stephen Decatur High School	Berlin	School								2	1	1	1	1				1				
Stockton Neighborhood Park	Stockton	Community Park										1				1	4			1		
Taylor Landing	Girdletree	Special Use Area	1																			
View Trail 100	County Wide	Bike Trail																				100
Whaleyville Park	Whaleyville	Mini-Park															2			1		
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>

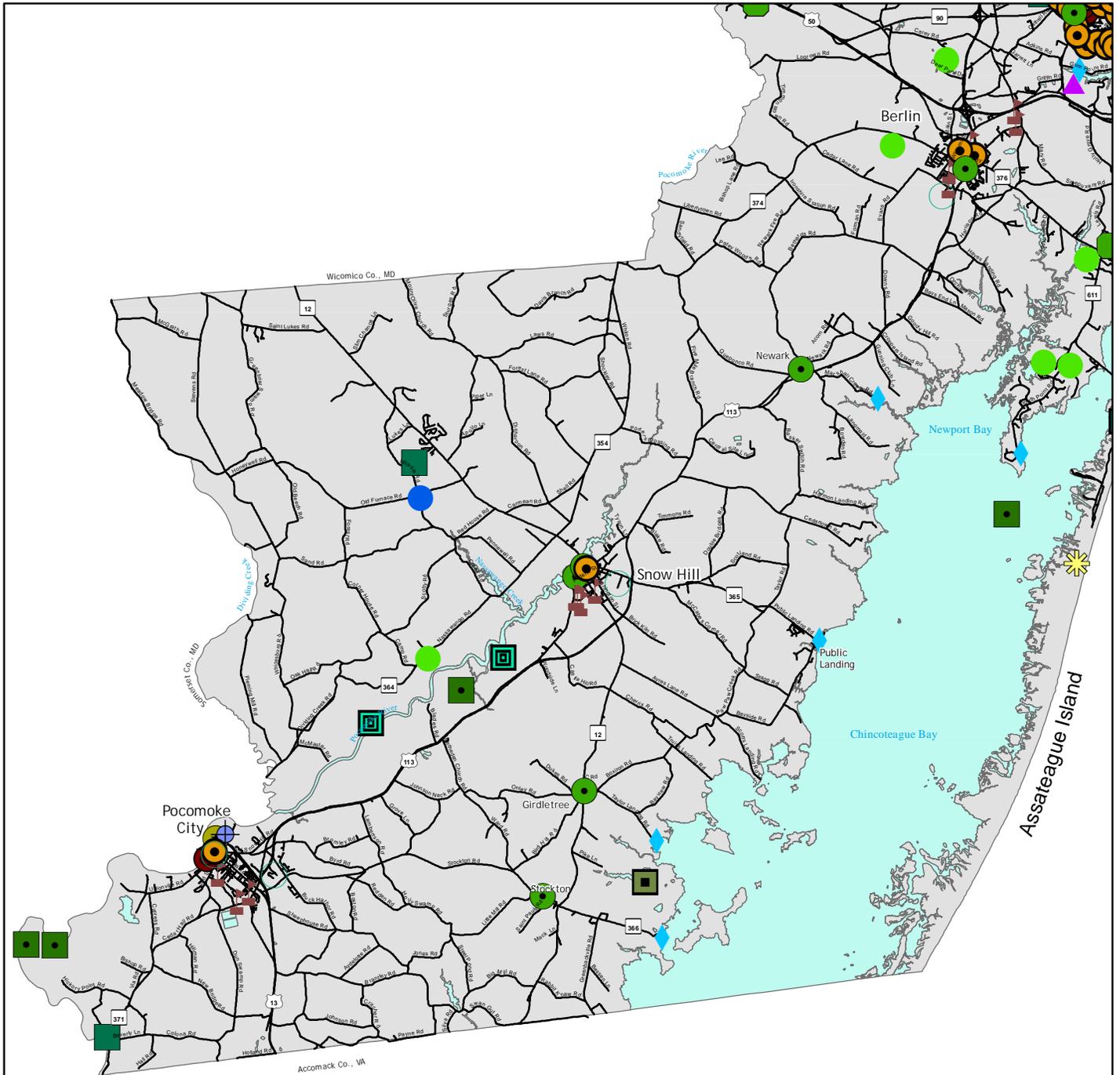
Table II-12C. Municipality-owned Recreation Sites, Worcester County

Site Name	City/Town	Site Class	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Group Campsites	Tent/RV Campsites	Canoeing/Kayaking, Mileage	Basketball Courts	Skateboard Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ball Fields, Diamond	Lighted Ball Field, Diamond	Multipurpose Field	Lighted Multipurpose Field	Picnic Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Indoor Recreational Areas	Swimming Pools	Tot Lots	Bike Trails, Mileage	Hiking Trail, Mileage
Byrd Park	Snow Hill	Community Park	3	8			1									2	20			1		
Cypress Park	Pocomoke City	Community Park	1	25				1	3				1			2	15			1		4
Dorchester Beach Volleyball Park	Ocean City	Mini Park									8											
Downtown Mini-Park	Pocomoke City	Mini Park																				
Dr. William E. Henry Park	Berlin	Community Park					3									1	5			1		
Eagle's Landing Golf Course	Ocean City	Golf Course only																				
Fiesta Park	Ocean City	Neighborhood Park														1	8					
Fisher Park	Snow Hill	Mini Park															2					
Goat Island Nature Trail	Snow Hill	Special Use Area																				0.25
Gorman Ave Park	Ocean City	Neighborhood Park							1							1	1			1		
James T. Sturgis Memorial Park	Snow Hill	Mini Park		10												1	10					
Jamestown Park	Ocean City	Mini Park																				
John Howard Burbage Park	Berlin	Mini Park																				
Laurel Street Park	Pocomoke City	Community Park	1	25													3					
Little Salisbury Park	Ocean City	Neighborhood Park					1		2											1		
Market Street Dock - Discovery Center	Pocomoke City	Special Use Area		12													1					
Northside Park	Ocean City	Sports Complex										3	1	1	1	185	1			1	1	
North Surf Park	Ocean City	Mini Park															1			1		
Ocean City Beach	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Ocean City Boardwalk	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Ocean City Convention Center	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Ocean City Entry Park	Ocean City	Mini Park																				
Ocean City Inlet Park	Ocean City	Mini Park																				
Ocean City Tennis Center	Ocean City	Community Park							9								1					
Pocomoke Community Center	Pocomoke City	Sports Complex					1															
Robin Park	Ocean City	Mini Park																				
Stephen Decatur Memorial Park	Berlin	Community Park							4	1						1	20			1		
Sunset Park	Ocean City	Community Park																				
Talbot Street Pier	Ocean City	Special Use Area																				
Winter Quarters Golf Club	Pocomoke City	Special Use Area	1														1			1		
<b>Total</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.25</b>

Table II-12D. Federal and State-owned Recreation Sites, Worcester County

Site Name	Acres	Site Class	Boat Ramps	Boat Slips	Group Campsites	RV/Tent Campsites	Canoeing/Kayaking, Mileage	Basketball Courts	Skateboard Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ball Fields, Diamond	Lighted Ball Fields, Diamond	Multi-Purpose Fields	Lighted Multi-Purpose Fields	Picnic Pavilions	Picnic Tables	Indoor Recreational Areas	Swimming Pools	Tot Lots	Bike Trails, mileage	Hiking Trails, Mileage
Assateague Island National Seashore	8,000	National Seashore			1	354	22										6				5	1.5
Assateague Island State Park	859	State Park				350											350				1	
E.A. Vaughn Wildlife Management Area	2,629	State Wildlife Management Area					15															
Isle of Wight Wildlife Management Area	217	State Wildlife Management Area																				
Lankford's Discovery Natural Heritage Area	283	State Natural Resource Management Area																				
Milburn Landing	370	State Park	1		2	32					1				2				1	4.5		
Pocomoke River State Forest	13,639	State Natural Resource Management Area																				
Pocomoke River Wildlife Management Area	1,008	State Natural Resource Management Area																				
Route 528 Bikeway, Ocean City to Delaware Line	11	State of Maryland																				
Shad Landing State Park	544	State Park	2	25	2	179	2				2		1		2				1			6.5
Sinepuxent Bay Wildlife Management Area	80	State Natural Resource Management Area					4															
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,640</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>8</b>





**Figure II-2. Recreational Sites, Southern Worcester County**

- |  |                   |  |                           |  |  |
|--|-------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|
|  | Amusement Park    |  | Historic/Cultural Area    |  | School                                 |
|  | Boardwalk         |  | Horse Track               |  | Special Use Area                       |
|  | Boat Ramp         |  | Large Urban/Regional Park |  | Sports Complex                         |
|  | Camping           |  | Marina                    |  | State Natural Resource Management Area |
|  | Community Park    |  | Mini-Park                 |  | State Park                             |
|  | Convention Center |  | National Seashore         |  | State Wildlife Management Area         |
|  | Golf Course       |  | Neighborhood Park         |  | Other Public Land                      |

Source: Worcester County



## Chapter III: Agricultural Land Preservation

This chapter documents the extent to which progress has been made toward achievement of the agricultural land preservation goals and objectives identified in the 2009 State Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan and the County's 2006 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.

### Overview

Approximately 87% of the county is zoned A-1 (Agricultural) or RP (Resource Protection); 169,158 and 87,463 acres respectively.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture noted that the county's 384 farms covered 110,847 acres or 36 percent of Worcester County.<sup>2</sup> Average farm size was 289 acres, and median size was 67 acres.<sup>3</sup> Worcester County ranks second in the state in broiler inventory and in corn production, and fifth in soybean production.<sup>4</sup> 57,937,906 broilers were sold in 2007 from 145 farms<sup>5</sup>.

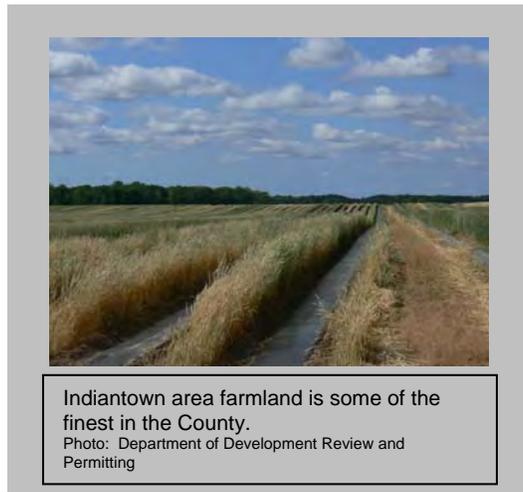
The chicken industry continues to be a staple element of the economy on the Delmarva Peninsula including in Worcester County. Not only chicken production itself, but also locally produced corn and soybean meal are essential for the chicken industry; the

large base of local farmers is an important part of the "three legged stool" (poultry growers, poultry companies, and grain farmers) needed to sustain the industry.

The forest products industry is important in Worcester County. Like farmland, all forestland is not equally productive. Riparian areas, critical area buffers, wetlands and certain hydric soils are important to protect for habitat and water quality, but not critical to the forestry industry. The shortage of forestland

available for forest products has contributed to a large reduction in the capacity of the forest products industry on the lower shore.<sup>6</sup> Due to the current economic downturn, supply is meeting demand, however demand is expected to grow in the long run especially for wood for

fuel (cellulosic ethanol or wood fired power plants).<sup>7</sup> The more acres of forestland available, the more likely Worcester's forests can be managed sustainably.<sup>8</sup>



### State Agricultural Land Preservation Goals

The 2009 State Plan identified the following goals for agricultural land preservation:

<sup>2</sup> Census of Agriculture, USDA. 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Agricultural Statistics Service, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Larry Walton, Vision Forestry, personal communication. February 18, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a 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.
- Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020.
- 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:
  - 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; and
- 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 the public.

### **County Agricultural Land Preservation Goals**

Worcester County recognizes the important economic role and other long-term benefits of agriculture, and shares the State of Maryland's goals for farmland protection. The County's 2006 Plan identified the following goals:

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting agricultural production;

- Protect natural, forestry and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with farmland;
- To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.

Worcester County's 2006 comprehensive plan which was revised with adoption of the Priority Preservation Element in 2010, recommended the goal of 1,000 acres of farmland protection per year for the next six years. The Priority Preservation Element identifies a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) of 195,000 acres, 64% of the county's land area. The long-term goal is to protect 100,000 acres within this area for agricultural and forestry, by protecting 800 acres *within the PPA* annually.

### Progress Since 2006

Worcester County has protected, on average approximately 700 acres of farmland/productive forestland annually from 2006 to 2010. This falls short of goals stated in 2006. The primary reason for this is the economic downturn that caused a drop in state funding for farmland preservation.

A map showing protected land discussed below is provided at the end of this chapter (Figure III-1).

### MALPF

Worcester County continues to have a "certified" agricultural land preservation program (as of July 1, 2004). This

allows the county to retain additional transfer tax and access additional state funding match for purchase of agricultural easements through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

From 2006 to 2010, 1,872 +/- acres (11 properties) have been protected with MALPF easements at a cost of approximately \$6 million. This is about 375 acres protected annually, however it represents a 30% increase in the MALPF easement-protected acreage in Worcester County.



Protection of farmland supports a major economic sector while also maintaining low cost of government services.  
Photo: NRCS

### Rural Legacy

Worcester County's Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area is approximately 26,110 acres in size. 14,000 acres are permanently protected, either by state ownership or easement. The 2006 County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan noted that the county goal is to protect 3,000 to 4,000 acres in the Rural Legacy Area in the next 10 years (this is 300 to 400 acres per year).

Approximately 7,400 acres are protected with a Coastal Bays Rural Legacy easement. From 2006 to 2010, seven

properties were protected in the Coastal Bays RLA with Rural Legacy easements; 814 acres, or 162 acres per year, at a cost of approximately \$2.3 million.

Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area was created in 2008. It is located in the southern portion of the Dividing Creek watershed, 23,000 acres in size, and includes both Worcester and Somerset counties. Protection of the first Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area easement in Worcester County occurred in 2009. Two properties have been protected in Worcester County to date, totaling approximately 730 acres.

#### Other Land Protection Programs

Worcester County has worked with Program Open Space and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect properties that contain agricultural land, as well as important wetland resources, during 2006-2010. This effort resulted in protection of three properties in the Coastal Bays watershed that total approximately 750 acres. In addition approximately 150 acres of farmland and another 250+ acres of working forest has been protected by the CREP Permanent Easement Program (see Chapter IV).

#### Land Use Management

The County Commissioners of Worcester County adopted a new zoning code and map on November 3, 2009, consistent with the 2006 comprehensive plan and land use plan map.

Worcester County's zoning code will continue to protect rural areas from irreversible, sprawl development. In the "A-1" (Agricultural) zone only five (5)

lots may be created from what was an entire parcel of land in 1967; six (6) lots only where rural clustering is accomplished. The estimated build-out density in the "A-1" zone is 1:20<sup>9</sup>. Between 2006 and 2010, 1,229 acres of land zoned for farming uses county-wide was subdivided for residential purposes.<sup>10</sup> This represents less than 0.1% of the A-1 zone (169,158 acres).

Lands zoned "RP" (Resource Protection) are particularly in proximity to the coast, rivers and streams and generally constrain development due to their environmental sensitivity or the fact that they are already protected by state ownership or permanent conservation easement. Land zoned RP may contain soils that support farming or forestry. Approximately 87,463 acres are zoned RP (29% of the county). The allowed uses in the RP zone are similar to allowed uses in the A-1 zone; a significant difference is that any subdivision in the RP zone must be approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Land zoned "A-2" retains some of the uses by right that were permitted under the previous "A-1" zone, that have been removed from the new "A-1" zone. In addition, consolidation of development rights onto one parcel, are permitted in very limited circumstances in the "A-2" zone. The "A-2" zone encompasses 7,253 acres (2.5% of the county's zoned area).

---

<sup>9</sup> Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Certification Program Application, Worcester County, Maryland; July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Worcester County. Note: this analysis was conducted using the previous zoning map. Not all of this land was converted to non-agricultural use, subdivided parcels ranged in size from 2 acres to 96 acres.

## Summary of Needed Improvements

Due to protective zoning in the A-1, A-2 and RP zones of the county, the relatively low cost of easements (compared to other counties), and a commitment to MALPF program certification, Worcester County is positioned to be successful at meeting the state and county land protection goals in the long run. Challenges include:

- Inadequate funding for land protection
- Threats to economic viability of agriculture

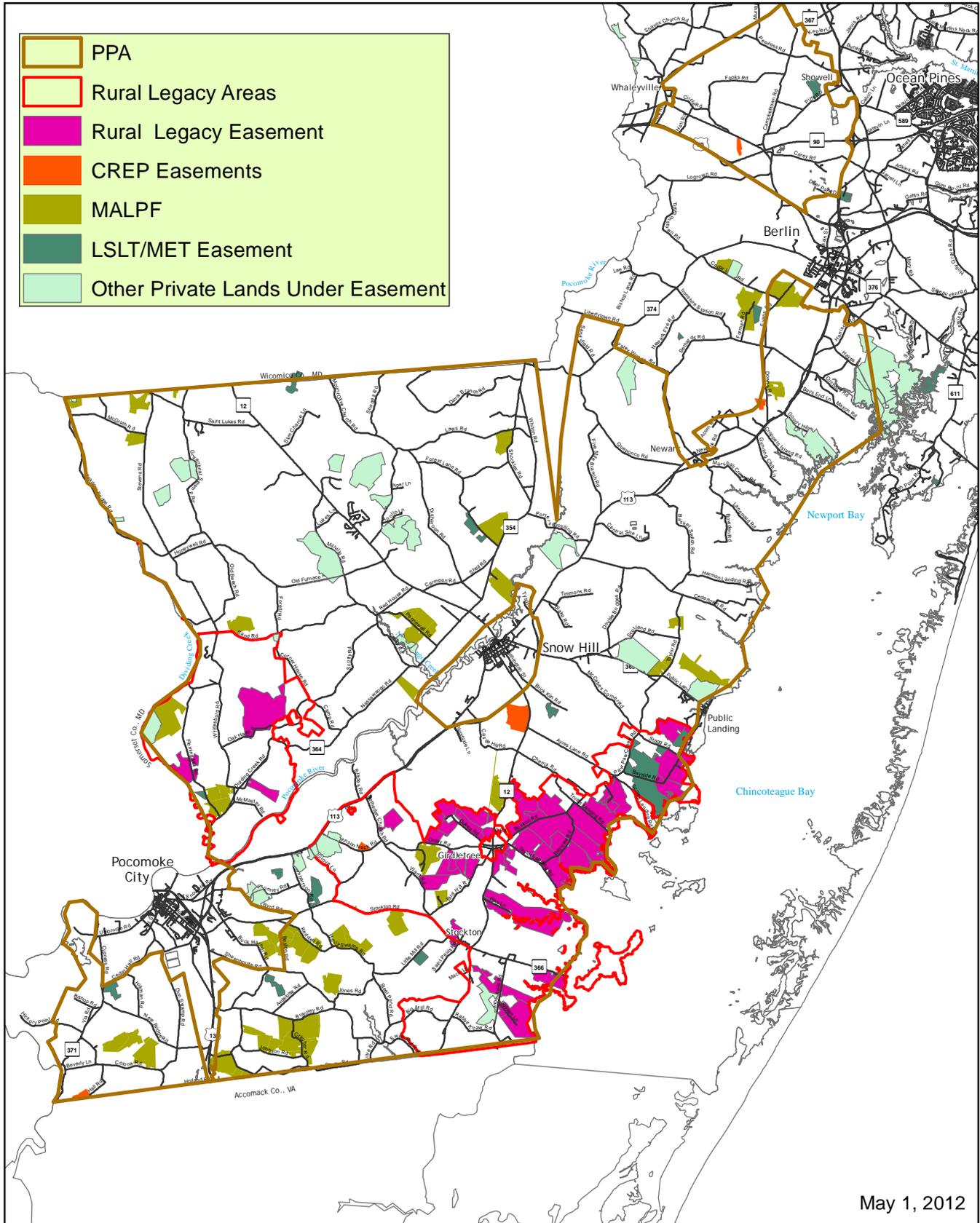
The county mainly relies on state and federal funding to meet its land protection goals. While federal funding of land protection has been on the rise in the county's land protection programs, as a match, state funding has been falling. For example, Rural Legacy funding in the early years of the program (1999 to 2003) exceeded \$1 million annually. But from FY06 to FY11 only around \$500,000 has been awarded to Worcester County annually.

Land protection alone will not ensure protection of agriculture. Farming needs to remain profitable. Increasing on-farm income in a variety of ways including developing opportunities for value-added processing, agro-tourism, continuing education for farmers, and educating county citizens on the value of supporting local farms, are some of many supportive actions that can be taken to help keep farming viable.

## Conclusion

Worcester County's primary land use is agricultural. It is the county's desire to protect its agricultural land base, while also accommodating new development in appropriately planned locations. In recent years, the combination of local and state programs have ensured a pattern of development and protection that concentrates residential and commercial development in planned areas, and protects contiguous farmland. It is critical that the state and county continue to work closely to ensure that agricultural land protection programs are available and well-funded, and policies to protect farming practices are implemented.

# Figure III-1. Agricultural Land Protection, Worcester County, Maryland\*



\*This map shows protected lands that are both forested and in cropland. Some restrictions on agricultural use or forestry apply to some easements, depending on the program and the individual property.

Data provided by Worcester County DRP and Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



## Chapter IV: Natural Resource Conservation

---

This chapter documents the county's goals for natural resource lands and conservation areas for natural resources and the extent to which progress has been made toward achievement of the program development strategy identified in the County's 2006 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.

### County Natural Resource Lands Conservation Goals

Worcester County's natural resource protection objectives, identified in the 2006 comprehensive plan, are to:

- Instill environmental stewardship as a universal ethic.
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Enhance or restore natural resources and functions where possible.
- Conserve resources by reducing unnecessary consumption.

The county's broad goals and objectives, stated in the comprehensive plan, encompass or accommodate all of the state's goals for conservation of natural resource lands, which are:

- 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 and incentives for resource-based economies that increase retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands;
  - Avoid and minimize impacts of publicly funded infrastructure development projects on natural resources; and
  - Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of resource impacted.
- Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as GreenPrint.
  - Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that fall outside the green infrastructure: 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.

- Assess the combined ability of State and local programs to:
  - 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.
- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated State/local strategy to achieve them through State and local implementation programs.

The 2006 comprehensive plan also identifies specific objectives and actions for protection/preservation of groundwater, forests, threatened and

endangered species, floodplains, mineral resources. Environmentally sensitive design, green building and green infrastructure are also addressed.

### **Priority Areas for Natural Resource Protection**

The 2006 comprehensive plan identifies “areas defined by their soils (muck), state-owned natural areas, existing conservation zoning, tidal wetlands and selected riparian corridors” as “green infrastructure” on the Land Use Plan map. This differs from the state’s definition of green infrastructure, which are “those areas of greatest statewide ecological importance.” The state used a complex data analysis and mapping process to identify these areas. The first step in the assessment of the state’s green infrastructure identified the heart of the green infrastructure, called "hubs." These are typically unfragmented areas hundreds or thousands of acres in size, and are vital to maintaining the state’s ecological health. They provide habitat for native plants and animals, protect water quality and soils, regulate climate, and perform other critical functions.

The second step connected hubs with "corridors" - linear remnants of natural land such as stream valleys and mountain ridges that allow animals, seeds, and pollen to move from one area to another. They also protect the health of streams and wetlands by maintaining adjacent vegetation. Preserving linkages between the remaining blocks of habitat will ensure the long-term survival and continued diversity of Maryland’s plants, wildlife, and environment. The state’s “Targeted Ecological Areas” boundary for Worcester County is provided in Figure V-1.

In general, the areas of highest priority for natural resource land conservation in Worcester County at this time are the Coastal Bays and Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Areas, the entire Coastal Bays shoreline, and lands that abut the tributaries to the Coastal Bays. The latter two areas, although protected to some degree by restrictive zoning and the Critical Area regulations, have been subject to greatest development pressure or other alteration, and are key to preserving the water quality of the Coastal Bays. The county also recognizes the importance of headwaters in the protection of waterway/watershed health. Forested lands in headwater areas are considered important for long-term protection. An example of this kind of area is Holly Grove Swamp in the Ayres Creek watershed, which has been targeted for conservation in cooperation with the Maryland Coastal Bays Program and the Trust for Public Land. The County is also a non-matching partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Finally, in 2009 Worcester County and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program identified a Coastal Bays Target Area for resource land protection.

A map showing the areas targeted for land protection as well as lands already protected is provided as Figure IV-1.

### **Implementing Programs**

The county has several efforts underway to expand and better connect natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure. The Coastal Bays and Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Areas are discussed in the previous chapter. This program not only protects key agricultural lands, but along with it, buffers, wetlands, forestlands and other

sensitive natural resources. The county goal is to protect 3,000 to 5,000 acres in this area, in the next 10 years, creating a permanent “greenway” connecting E.A.Vaughn Wildlife Management Area to Pocomoke State Forest.



The Coastal Bays RLA protects 16 miles of Chincoteague Bay shoreline.  
Photo: Department of Development Review and Permitting

Worcester County continues to work with The Trust for Public Land and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to protect the headwaters of Ayres Creek (Holly Grove Swamp). It is the largest contiguous forest remaining in the northern coastal bays watershed and is a key stop-over in the migratory bird “Atlantic Flyway”. To date, three federal grants to purchase development rights or in fee to protect native habitat, have been awarded to Worcester County or the State of Maryland from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In 2011, a 430-acre property (the Adkins Co. Property) on Ayres Creek was purchased with these funds for passive access and habitat management. Current zoning in this area allows for agricultural use and/or resource conservation, and minimal development.

The permanent CREP Easement program became available in 2010/11 and the county has or will protect 423 acres of stream/ditch buffer and adjacent woodland/farmland in 2011.

Most of the Chincoteague Bay watershed is designated as a Forest Legacy Area by the State of Maryland, and therefore properties there are eligible for Forest Legacy easement purchases. One easement has been purchased to date. The Forest Legacy Program is a U.S. Department of Agriculture Program.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office initiated the Pocomoke River Conservation Partnership in 2006, which includes the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, and Sweetbay Watershed Conservation as matching partners, and Worcester County as a non-matching partner. This project is a long-term effort to protect and restore migratory bird habitat in the Pocomoke River watershed. The Phase I project area is located on the mainstem of the Pocomoke River and encompasses portions of Wicomico and Worcester counties along the county line, north of Snow Hill. The primary goal of the Partnership is to accomplish the rapid protection of several thousand acres of ecologically important habitat in the watershed over the next few years by conservation easement and fee-simple acquisition, and other means. Several hundred acres have been protected with easements through this program, that are held by the state of Maryland.

Nassawango Creek is Maryland's largest private nature preserve at 9,100 acres. Nearly the entire corridor of the

Nassawango Creek, one of Maryland's most pristine waterways, is owned and protected by The Nature Conservancy. Nassawango Creek and adjacent wetland and upland is home to an abundant diversity of life, including many species of orchids, warblers, and other plants and animals. While the county has not generally worked with The Nature Conservancy actively to protect this area, the county does recognize the natural resource value of this area and the importance of its permanent protection.

Besides employing programs that purchase of development rights, Worcester County's strict A-1 ("Agricultural) and RP ("Resource Protection") zoning serve to protect contiguous acres of forest (as well as farmland) throughout the county. Only five lots may be subdivided from what was a single parcel of land as of 1967 in the A-1 zone, in the RP zone subdivision is allowed by special exception. The realized density is lower than 1:20 in these zones that cover approximately 87% of the county. This reflects the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, which calls for continued strong protection of the majority of the county with agricultural or conservation zoning, with development focused in towns and other appropriate growth areas, only.

### **Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program**

The following actions were recommended in the 2006 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan to achieve local natural resource

preservation goals. Following each recommended action is a description of implementation since the date of the Plan:

- The state should consistently provide funding for protection of land with easements and some fee simple acquisitions in Worcester County. For the next five years, this should be \$1.5 million per year, in combined programs. Some of this should be available specifically for habitat enhancement and protection. The county should consider devoting an annual expenditure to land protection of \$200,000 or more. *Funding has been somewhat below this projection. Annual state Rural Legacy funding has been around \$500,000. Although MALPF easement purchases since 2006 have totaled an average of \$1.2 million annually, this includes some funds provided in fiscal years prior to 2006. Actual MALPF funding since FY07 has been around \$4 million, or around \$800,000 annually. Because of the economic downturn and loss of revenue, the county stopped providing matching funds for Rural Legacy. It should be noted that nearly \$1 million has been provided in state funds for CREP easement purchases in 2011 (423 acres).*
- The county and state should work together to review state-owned lands in the county that could serve public needs, including water-access, hunting and bird-watching, and find ways to make these lands available for

appropriate recreational uses.

*Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Town of Ocean City are working together to provide a new canoe/kayak access on Ayres Creek (on town-owned land). Other opportunities and funding for them will be explored as they arise.*

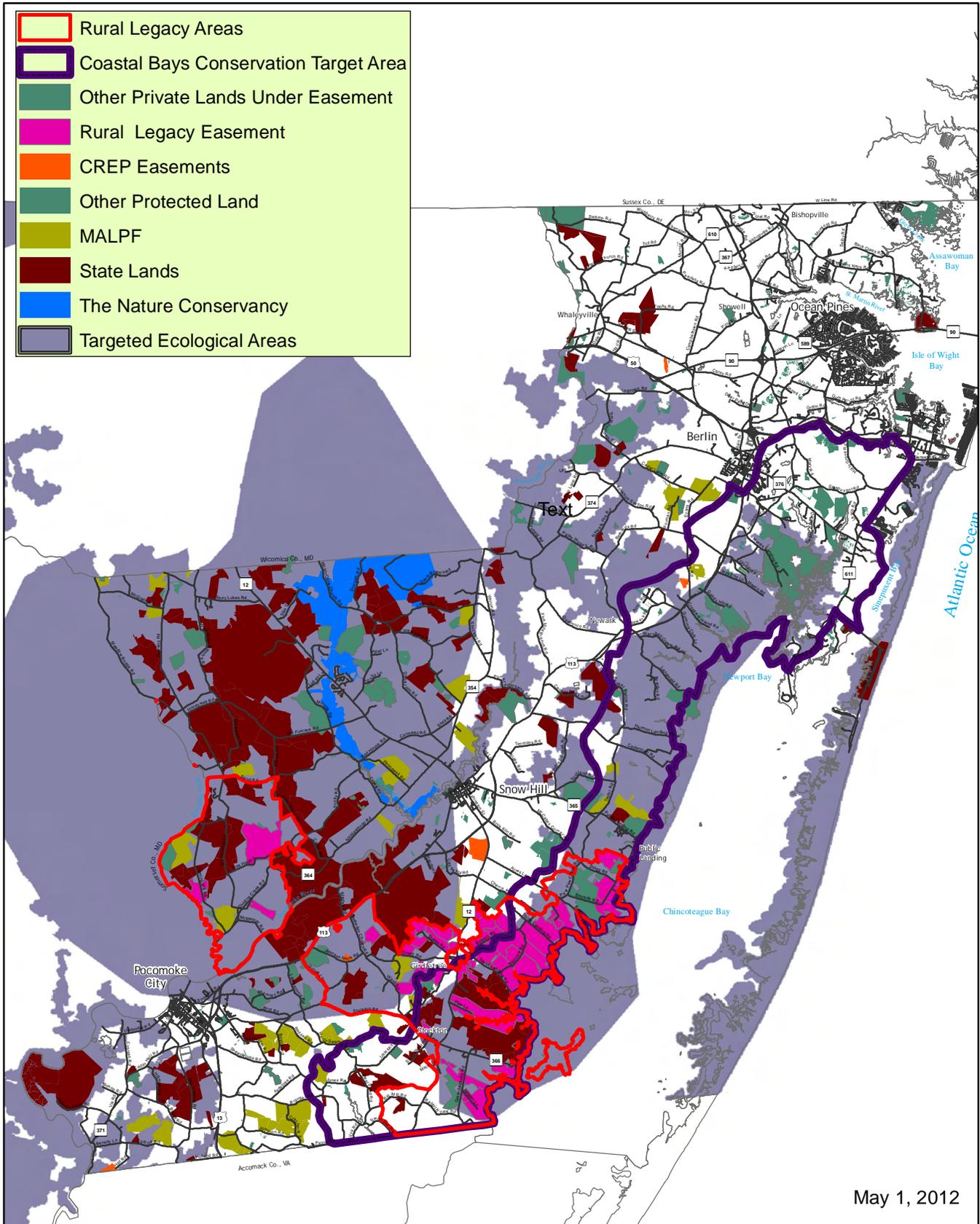
- The county should consider developing a “Greenways” plan that would outline a more specific strategy for linking public lands via bicycle and walking paths. *This has not been done.*
- The county should consider working with Program Open Space to add a park that includes natural resource values to its inventory, particularly in the northeastern area of the county where development changes are expected to be most significant in the next five years. Such a park could eventually include an environmental education facility available to the public schools and the general public, as well as other passive and active recreational amenities. *Worcester County and Maryland Department of Natural Resources worked together to obtain matching funds from Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) to purchase 430 acres on Ayres Creek in the Newport Bay watershed. The property will be used for passive access only. The county also continues to work towards opening Grey’s Creek Nature Park in*

- northernmost Worcester County as both a passive park and education facility.*
- The county should consider implementing additional guidelines or regulations for ensuring that key natural lands and ecological processes are protected and preserved during and following new residential development. This includes requiring new development to include bike and greenways that are integrated with a larger system. *The 2006 Comprehensive Plan was implemented with a new zoning code in 2009. The new code brought new regulations regarding site design. Bike and greenways integration is not part of the new code.*
  - Impact fees or dedications levied on new development should be explored as a way to provide passive parkland, such as scenic view maintenance, forest land for bird-watching or wetlands for canoeing. *This has not been explored.*
  - The county should implement a program or policy that promotes protection of natural shorelines. *Maryland Department of the Environment now requires “living shorelines” where practicable. In addition, the county, in cooperation with Maryland Department of Natural Resources, has provided educational opportunities for landowners and contractors on living shoreline design. The county has also retrofitted several county-owned shorelines to demonstrate the effectiveness and benefits of a living shoreline for erosion control.*
- The county should work with the state’s Forest Service to establish forest management plans for county-owned forest lands, to maximize value of the land for timber and/or for habitat. *This action was recommended by Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Forest Service. No action has been taken.*
  - The county should complete establishment of a forest mitigation banking program as part of the already established Forest Conservation Law. *A mitigation banking system now exists.*

## Conclusion

Worcester County’s abundant natural resources—forests, tidal wetlands, natural shorelines, and other features—are important state assets as well as important to local citizens, for ecological and economic reasons. Currently, local and state programs are reasonably effective at protecting these natural landscapes and features. However, as development pressure and population increases in the county, natural resource protection programs must continue to be funded and additional measures implemented to ensure protection of these treasures for future generations.

# Figure IV-1. Lands Targeted for Protection and Protected Lands, Worcester County, Maryland



Data provided by Worcester County DRP and Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



## **Appendix. Calculation of the Default State Recreational Acreage Goal**

---

This appendix summarizes step-by-step how the county determined whether it meets the state's recreation acreage goal of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons.

There are three categories of preserved acreage that count towards this goal: local recreational acreage, a portion of local natural resource acreage, and a portion of qualifying state and federal acreage. The types of land that qualify under each category and how each category counts towards the goal are described below.

### *Step 1: Setting the Goal*

The state-recommended ratio is 30 acres of recreational land/1000 persons. Since the population of Worcester County determined by 2010 Census is 51,454, **the state-recommended recreational goal is 1,544 acres, county-wide for 2010.**

### *Step 2: Local Recreational Portion of the Goal*

A minimum of 15 acres per 1,000 people must come from locally owned lands. Lands that may be counted as locally owned are: neighborhood parks, community parks, city/county-owned parks, regional parks.

Total acreage of locally owned recreational land that falls into the categories above, is 1,705.6 acres county-wide.

**15 acres per 1,000 persons must be locally owned, so for 2010 total acres of locally owned recreational land should be at least: 772 acres.** Worcester County has 33 acres of locally owned recreational land per 1,000 persons.

### *Step 3: Local Natural Resources Acreage Portion of the Goal*

In addition to local recreational acreage, one third of the acreage of certain types of natural resource land can be counted towards the default recommended acreage goal.

Local natural resource lands that qualify add up to 5,417 acres. One third of that may be counted towards meeting the generic acreage goal. That amount is 1,805 acres. This is 35 acres per 1,000 people.

### *Step 4: State and Federal Acreage Portion of the Goal*

If needed, up to 15 acres per 1,000 persons of state and federal lands present in the county, *in excess of 60 acres per 1,000 persons*, can be used to meet the default recommended acreage goal.

- State and federal acreage is 11,546 acres.
- Total calculated state and federal acres per 1,000 people is 224 acres.
- Land in excess of 60 acres/1,000 people is 164 acres per 1,000 people.

*Conclusion*

In summary, Worcester's local recreational acreage provides 33 acres per 1,000 people. The state default minimum requirement is 15 acres per 1,000 people for local recreational acreage, which Worcester County exceeds. In addition, local natural resource lands and state and federal lands contribute to an amount that in total far exceeds the 30 acres per 1,000 people: **232 acres per 1,000 people.**



Prepared by:  
Worcester County Department of  
Development, Review and Permitting  
Worcester County Government Center,  
Suite 1201  
1 West Market Street  
Snow Hill, MD 21863  
410-632-1200  
[www.co.worcester.md.us/drp/drpindex](http://www.co.worcester.md.us/drp/drpindex)

Prepared by:  
Worcester County Department of Recreation &  
Parks  
6030 Public Landing Road  
Snow Hill, MD 21863  
410-632-2144  
<http://www.co.worcester.md.us/recreation/rec>



