



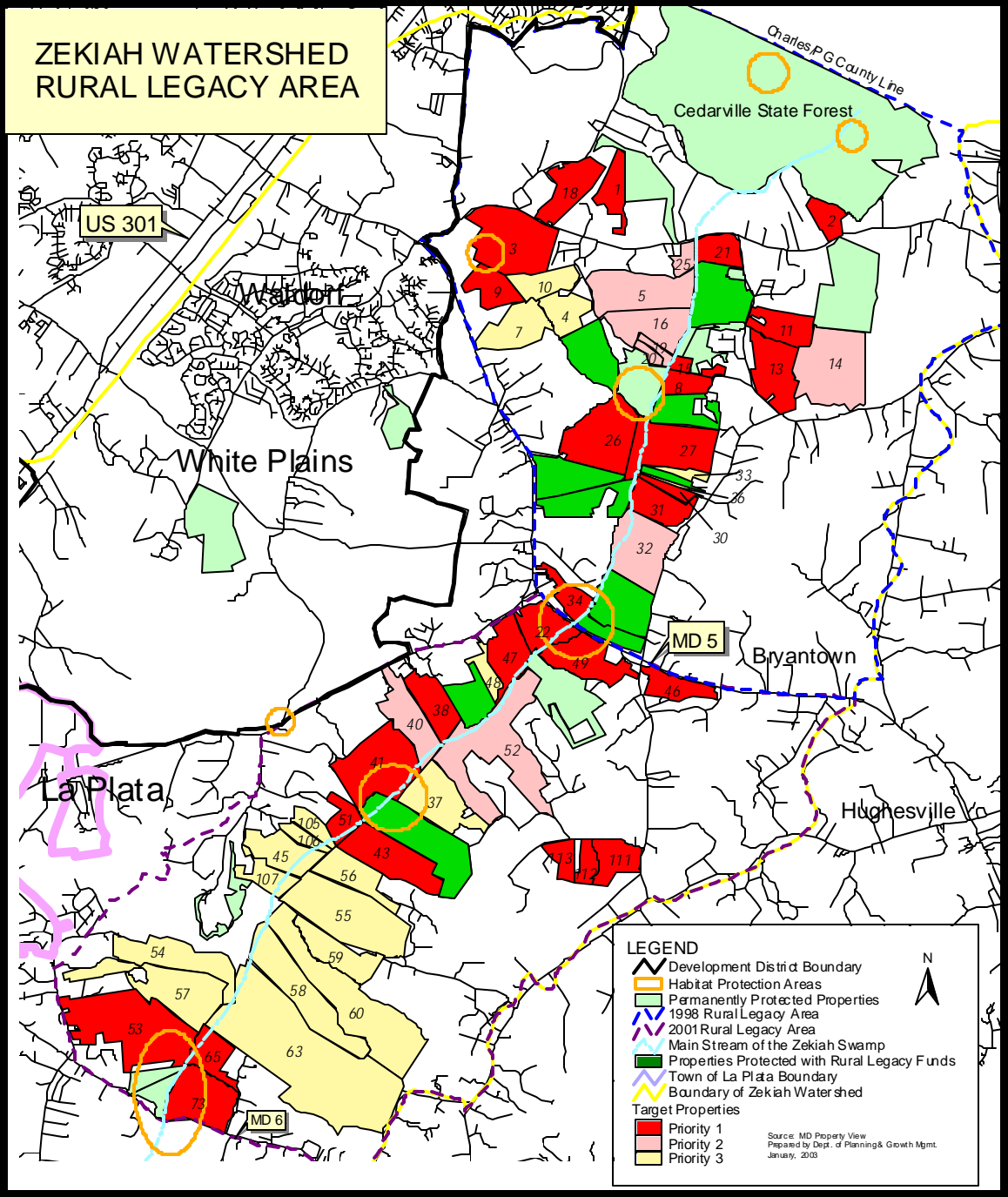
## CHARLES COUNTY'S RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM ZEKIAH WATERSHED

In an effort to combat sprawl and to encourage private/public partnerships in land conservation, the State of Maryland enacted the Rural Legacy Program ([www.dnr.state.md.us/rurallegacy/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/rurallegacy/)) in 1997 along with Maryland "Smart Growth Initiatives." The Rural Legacy Program allows local governments and non-profit organizations to compete for funding opportunities to protect vulnerable areas from development.

Charles County designated the Zekiah Swamp Run Watershed as its Rural Legacy Area. Although the entire watershed is extensive and ecologically significant, the County designated only a portion of the watershed in order to focus its preservation efforts along the main stem in the northern area, which is facing increasing development pressure. Over the years, the boundary of the rural legacy area has been extended. The Zekiah Swamp Run Watershed is an ecologically diverse area that contains many endangered plants and animals along with areas of great archeological, historical and cultural significance for Charles County.

### Watershed Description:

Charles County's Rural Legacy Area includes approximately 31,000 acres and extends from Maryland Route 6 north to the Charles County border, excluding the Waldorf area.



## Targeted Properties:

With the rural legacy area, the County has identified 57 properties totaling 8,584 acres of land for preservation. Three categories of priority properties have been identified and are shown on the map. Priority 1: Thirty (30) properties totaling 3,705 acres; Priority 2: Eight (8) properties totaling 1,177 acres; and Priority 3: Nineteen (19) totaling 3,701 acres.

Acreage Protected as of February 10, 2003:

Fee Simple:	791.03 acres on 6 properties
Easement:	394.62 acres on 3 properties
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,185.65 acres</b>

In addition to these properties, the County is negotiating with several other landowners to purchase easements or fee simple property.



## Funding Sources:

Funding for Rural Legacy acquisitions is through the State Rural Legacy Grant Program. Each year the Maryland legislature and the Governor determine the annual budget for the Rural Legacy Program. The grant application process is competitive and the State Rural Legacy Board award grants annually based on funding availability.

Charles County also provides staff resources and direct cash contributions for acquisitions. To generate additional funds for easement purchases, Charles County intends to sell some of the properties purchased in fee simple with easement restrictions placed on the property. The easement restrictions will limit the amount of development on the property.

Past grant awards to the County are as follows:

FY98-99	\$1,500,000
FY 99-00	\$500,000
FY00-01	\$1,000,000
FY01-02	\$1,500,000
FY 02-03	\$1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,500,000</b>

## Ongoing Preservation Activities in the Watershed:

Within the watershed, additional acreage is protected through a combination of public and private endeavors. As of January 2003, protected lands in the watershed include the following:

State parks and open space:	2,706 acres
County Agricultural Program:	313 acres
Maryland Environmental Trust:	141 acres
Private Land Trust:	18 acres
Forest Conservation Easements:	355 acres
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>3,533 acres</b>

## What can you do to help?

You can help protect the watershed and improve water quality in the watershed by installing vegetative buffers, participating in the CREP program, implementing soil and water conservation plans, reducing impervious surface, implementing timber harvest plans and protecting non-tidal wetlands.

## Contact Information:

### **Charles County Government**

Mr. Charles Rice, Charles County Agricultural Land Use Planner  
P.O. Box 2150  
La Plata, Maryland 20646  
Voice Mail (301) 645-0651.  
E-mail [ricec@govt.co.charles.md.us](mailto:ricec@govt.co.charles.md.us)  
[www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning](http://www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning)

### **Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Rural Legacy Program**

Pamela F. Bush  
Director, Rural Legacy Program  
Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue, E-4  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-260-8428  
410-260-8404 (fax)  
E-Mail: [pbush@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:pbush@dnr.state.md.us)  
Web Site: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/rurallegacy/>

### **The Maryland Environment Trust**

Ms. Diane Chasse, Easement Planner  
410-514-7908  
E-Mail: [dchasse@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:dchasse@dnr.state.md.us)  
<http://www.conservemd.org/county-info/charles/>

### **Conservancy for Charles County, Inc.**

Ms. Vivian Mills  
1170 Overlook Drive  
Accokeek, MD 20607

Voice Mail (301) 932-5714 (message only) or (301) 283-2410

E-Mail [millsgroup@erols.com](mailto:millsgroup@erols.com)

Coming Soon: [www.conservecharles.org](http://www.conservecharles.org)

**Charles Soil Conservation District**

Mr. Allan Cruikshank, District Manager

Southern Maryland Trade Center

101 Catalpa Drive, Suite 106-C

La Plata, MD 20646

E-Mail [acruikshank@md.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:acruikshank@md.nrcs.usda.gov)

**Wicomico Scenic River Commission**

Wicomico Scenic River Commission

P.O. Box 12

Mt. Victoria, MD 20661

[www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning/plans/landpreserv/wicomico/default.htm](http://www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning/plans/landpreserv/wicomico/default.htm)