

Section 7: Stewardship and Land Use

Context

Key to the future success of the Southern Maryland region's efforts to sustain and enhance heritage tourism efforts is the protection of the setting in which many of the region's key heritage resources are located. The region's landscapes and scenic views that serve as the backdrop enjoyed by the heritage visitor are every much as important as the protection and interpretation of the resources themselves.

A number of actions have been taken in the past to preserve heritage and natural resources located within the region and a growing number of programs are being utilized by the Counties in Southern Maryland to sustain land preservation and stewardship efforts. A number of state initiatives have also advanced policies that assure greater protection and stewardship of heritage and natural resources. As a result, the amount of land that can be characterized as having "protected lands status" in the region has grown substantially in recent years.

Over twenty-five percent (25%) of the Southern Maryland Region land area is protected either as regulated lands such as the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, or through voluntary easement programs such as agriculture preservation areas or historic districts, or as publicly controlled land such as parks and utility lands or through other mechanisms with built-in stewardship policies and programs.

Within the actual proposed Heritage Area Boundary the percentage of land afforded such levels of protection is even greater since a much higher percentage of the land area within the proposed Heritage region clusters is located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or is already protected through stewardship programs which served as part of the basis for establishing the proposed boundaries.

Protected Lands Summary

Protected lands within the heritage region include all lands protected by easement through a wide and growing variety of programs. Easements on lands may take the form of agricultural preservation easements, forest conservation easements, easements resulting from the transfer of development rights, or easements held by conservancy organizations. Federal and State-owned lands make up a significant portion of the total land area in the region and represent a substantial proportion of all protected lands to date. Table 7-1 identifies protected lands in each of the three counties in Southern Maryland and indicates the form of protection that has been extended to lands in each county. All told, stewardship programs have preserved or protected over 123,000 acres region-wide.

**Table 7-1
Protected Land Summary
Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties**

Source of Protection	Number of Acres Protected			Total
	Calvert County	Charles County	St. Mary's County	
Agricultural Preservation Districts	10,960	12,936	6,453	30,349
Agricultural Preservation Easements	4,127	2,206	4,723	11,056
Forest Conservation Easements	-	2,811	-	2,811
Rural Legacy Program Lands	1,250	1,111	1,522	3,883
Maryland Environmental Trust Easement	617	4,507	1,499	6,623
State owned Parks and Natural Resource Properties	3,030	15,158	6,831	25,019
Federally-owned land (includes Federal Bureau of Land Management)	296	6,549	7,800	14,645
Charles County Conservancy	-	17	-	17
The Nature Conservancy	473	1,345	-	1,818
Local Purchase or Transfer of Development Rights Programs	14,239	1,554	162	15,955
County and Municipal Parks	2,802	2,706	1,598	7,106
Clustered open space & Subdivision Recreation Area	3,794	-	-	3,794
Total	41,588	50,900	30,588	123,076

Existing Policy Framework

There are three important phases to the development of effective programs for the protection of heritage resources in a community. The first phase is the inventory of heritage resources, which have traditionally focused on historic buildings and places. More recently, heritage resources are being thought of as “the setting,” such as cultural and rural historic landscapes. These landscapes are defined by the National Park Service as geographical areas that reflect the cultural tradition, beliefs, practices, lifeways, arts, crafts, and social institutions valued by its long-term residents, or that historically have been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features. The second phase involves the evaluation and designation of the most significant resources to establish a sense of priority in directing stewardship and land preservation efforts. The third phase involves actions to protect these resources. Within the Southern Maryland Region, each of the three counties has identified and/or designated the most significant resource lands to be protected and in most cases has identified those intended to receive priority for protection. Actions to protect resources are ongoing and are related to a number of program initiatives identified in Table 7-1. The location of most of the existing lands in the region identified in Table 7-1 as “protected lands” are shown on Map 4-3 in Section 4, on page 55.

Although County and municipal programs have in large part contributed to local preservation and conservation activities in the region, there are a number of state programs that have contributed to the preservation and conservation efforts of all jurisdictions (albeit indirectly in some instances). Although the stated objectives of many of these programs are not always to protect heritage resources, most serve to support growth management and resource protection efforts which, in turn, provide clear benefits in the form of protection of the setting in which many of the heritage resources are concentrated. They broadly support stewardship objectives since they support achievement of the preservation and conservation objectives for the Southern Maryland Region, through better management of the location of future growth and protection of natural environments. Such efforts to manage growth and protect environmental assets better ensure that the public investment made in interpretation, recreation, historic preservation, and other projects, provides long term benefits. These state-wide growth management and environmental protection programs include the “Maryland Environmental Trust Local Land Trust Assistance Program”, “Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program,” the “Forest Conservation Act,” the “Economic Development, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992,” and Maryland’s “Smart Growth Initiatives” including the “Rural Legacy” and “Community Legacy” programs developed in the past few years.

State Level Policies and Programs

Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) Local Land Trust Assistance Program: In 1988, the MET developed the Local Land Trust Assistance Program to assist citizen groups in the formation and operation of land trusts. These local land trusts can hold conservation easements independently or jointly with MET. The landowner who gives an easement limits the right to develop and subdivide the land, now and in the future, but still remains the owner. The local land trust

organization accepting the easement agrees to monitor it forever to ensure compliance with its terms. Local land trusts in Southern Maryland include The American Chestnut Land Trust in Calvert County, the Charles County Conservancy, and the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, which operates in Ann Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's counties.

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1977 to preserve productive agricultural land and woodland, helps to curb the expansion of random urban development, protects wildlife and preserves the environmental quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its' tributaries. In order for a landowner to participate in the foundation's program they must establish an Agricultural Land Preservation District. If the property meets the minimum criteria as established by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, the landowners sign a voluntary agreement that simply states that the land will be maintained in agricultural use for a minimum of five years. The agreement further states that the land will not be subdivided for residential, commercial or industrial use while under district status. Once land is in an agricultural land preservation district, the landowner becomes eligible to make application to sell an agricultural land preservation easement to the state through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program: The "Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection Program" (Natural Resources Article 8-1801-8-1816) was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1984 out of concern for the decline in the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay. To confront the problem, the General Assembly designated the Critical Area and directed that new development in the Critical Area be regulated in an effort to minimize adverse impacts to water quality and wildlife habitat. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Legislation and each of the County's local programs which were subsequently developed establish three major goals:

- Minimize adverse impacts on water quality that result from high nutrient loadings in runoff from surrounding lands or from pollutants that are discharged from structures;
- Conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats; and
- Establish land use policies for development located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area that accommodates growth and also addresses the fact that, even if pollution is controlled, the number, movement, and activities of persons in that area can create environmental impacts.

The Critical Area Law states that there is a critical and substantial state interest to foster more sympathetic development activity along the Chesapeake Bay shoreline, in order to minimize damage to water quality and natural estuarine habitats. Pursuant to the requirements of the Critical Area Act passed by the General Assembly, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission was established. Appointed by the Governor, the Critical Area Commission is composed of representatives from Maryland's state government, environmental and other interest groups, and tidewater county jurisdictions. The Commission is responsible for leading local

governments in generating programs to address the Critical Area Law's concerns. The Commission was also mandated by the General Assembly to adopt criteria for guiding the preparation of local government programs.

The Commission also was directed to establish land-use policies within the Critical Area to address matters of development and accommodate growth. New development activities and the expansion of certain existing ones are allowed within the Critical Area, only when no environmentally acceptable alternative exists outside the Critical Area. Development may be required to correct an existing water quality or wastewater management problem. Because of the importance of good water quality and habitat protection, applicants for land uses near the water's edge must make site-specific findings. Each community in the Critical Area was required to formulate site-specific development objectives and procedures to eliminate or minimize impacts to the Critical Area.

Total land area within the three County Southern Maryland region is approximately 664,649 acres. Charles County is the largest in land area with 295,639 acres, followed by Saint Mary's at 231,280 acres and Calvert with 137,730 acres. Over 14 percent of the 3 County Southern Maryland region or slightly over 97,124 acres, is located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection District. This district extends 1,000 feet landward from the Potomac, Patuxent, Chesapeake Bay and tidal portions of their many tributaries. In many cases the shoreline is the area where heritage and key natural resources are co-located. The vast majority of these 97,124 acres in all three counties in the region is classified as a Resource Conservation Area, wherein new development is limited to a density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres. This provision will help insure a level of growth management and resource protection in coastal rural areas consistent with the protection of heritage and natural resources. The Critical Area Program's emphasis on public access to the water also is consistent with the objectives for the Heritage Region.

Aside from the density limitations, there are limitations on tree cutting, impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff quality, and other development and resource utilization standards. These will help insure that the natural environment along the shoreline is conserved. All three counties and the Towns of Leonardtown, Indian Head, Chesapeake Beach, and North Beach have established measures to protect Critical Area resources through locally developed programs that are consistent with State guidelines.

Forest Conservation Act: In 1991, the State of Maryland enacted the Forest Conservation Act to reduce the number of forested acres cleared when land is changed from forests or agriculture to residential, commercial, or industrial development. The Act allows development to occur while assuring that some portion of neighboring forest communities remain viable. The Forest Conservation Act provides guidelines for the amount of forest land retained or planted after the completion of development projects. These guidelines vary for each development site and are based on land-use categories. These categories include agricultural and resource, medium-density

residential, institutional development, high-density residential, mixed use, planned-units development, and commercial and industrial use areas.

Generally, rural areas with larger forests have higher thresholds to minimize the number of acres cleared. For example, an area zoned for medium-density residential use would require about 25% of the forests on the site to be retained. Areas zoned for commercial and industrial use would require about 15% retention. This allows development to occur in areas where it is appropriate while protecting forests. Where little or no forest exists, the Act requires that forests be established by planting trees. Using the same example, in medium-density residential use areas 20% of a project site would be planted, but only 15% of the site requires planting in a commercial and industrial use area. Under some conditions planting may occur outside of the project site where a forest would provide protection to other natural resources, such as streams or wetlands.

The Act has already reduced clearing and grading of development sites. The development planning process is a cooperative process including engineers, developers, and resource professionals to allow development without significantly degrading forests. It is one of the first laws of its kind in the Nation.

Economic, Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992: The “Economic, Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992” (the 1992 Planning Act) requires that county and municipal plans be implemented by laws, ordinances, and regulations consistent with the Planning Act and its seven visions. In addition, each county and municipality is required to update their comprehensive plan and implementing provisions to achieve consistency with the 1992 Planning Act. Directly addressing problems created by the pattern of wasteful-land-consuming development, the state’s visions declare the following:

- Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
- Sensitive areas are protected;
- In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources are protected;
- Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
- To assure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined; and
- Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

The state also has set into place procedures to insure that Maryland infrastructure improvements are consistent with state’s growth policy, as defined in the 1992 Planning Act. This procedure

(called project review) is a mechanism to assure projects are consistent with Maryland's growth policy and local comprehensive plans. The 1992 Planning Act states that a local government may not approve a local construction project involving the use of state funds, grants, loans, loan guaranties, or insurance, unless the project is consistent with the 1992 Planning Act's visions. Examples of local projects include community parks developed with state open space funds, schools, extensions of public sewer and water lines, and road construction.

One of the 1992 Planning Act's requirements is that each jurisdiction adopt policies and regulate sensitive areas, which include streams and stream buffers, habitats of threatened and endangered species, steep slopes, and 100 year flood plains. This policy and the resulting development control standards, along with the standards established in the Critical Area Law and the Forest Conservation Law, are significant protection measures. These initiatives are applicable to the Southern Maryland Heritage Region, considering that an estimated one third of the heritage area is forested. Many of these large forested areas contain mature deciduous species of trees and are rich with wildlife habitat. These provisions also are important for tributary streams, such as the Wicomico River, Nanjemoy Creek, Port Tobacco River, or Back Creek/Mill Creek, which are integral parts of the heritage setting. Currently, all three Counties and five incorporated Towns in the region are implementing sensitive area protection measures, including stream buffer and steep-slope requirements.

Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Initiatives: In 1997, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the "Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Initiatives" (Smart Growth). The intent of this legislation was to marshal the state's financial resources to support growth in Maryland's communities and limit development in agricultural and other resource areas. At the heart of "Smart Growth" are the "priority funding areas." Beginning October 1, 1998, the state's policy designated that priorities for funding would be projects for Maryland's municipalities, other existing communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas identified by the counties. The designation of the Clusters located within the heritage regions are generally outside planned growth areas with the exception of those smaller portions designated Target Investment Zones (TIZ's) which often correspond to areas targeted for re-development or Neighborhood Conservation. Most TIZ's within the heritage areas are not only appropriate locations to encourage investment in heritage area resources but are "identified priority funding areas". Many of these areas are also targeted investment locations for the "Community Legacy" Program established more recently as part of Maryland's Smart Growth Initiatives.

Another "Smart Growth" initiative, launched only over the past several years which offers ongoing potential to reinforce the stewardship objectives within the Heritage Region is the "Rural Legacy Program." Under the Maryland Department of Natural Resources DNR's Program Open Space (POS), the "Rural Legacy Program" provides monies to leverage bond funds for local governments and land trusts in order to purchase properties, property rights, or perpetual easements. An objective of this program is to preserve agricultural, forest, and natural lands in contiguous blocks, corridors or greenways. Approximately 3,883 acres within the Region have already been preserved (see Table 7-1).

Many other state programs also are included in “Smart Growth.” Various programs administered under the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHCD), as well as agencies such as the Maryland Office of Planning (MOP) and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), have tremendous potential to promote neighborhood re-vitalization and other “infill” re-development projects. Some “Smart Growth” programs include Maryland’s “Main Street Program” and “Smart Codes” for adaptive re-use.

Maryland’s “Main Street Program” is a downtown revitalization strategy. The program’s goal is to strengthen the economic potential of traditional communities while maintaining overall character. “Main Street Maryland” assists communities to improve their economy, overall appearance, and downtown image as a traditional center for business activity. According to State statistics, “over seven billion dollars” has been reinvested in participating communities since the program’s inception resulting in a gain of “33,000 new businesses” and “115,000 new jobs.” MOP can assist any community interested in the program. The towns of Leonardtown, Indian Head, North Beach and Chesapeake Beach are all engaged in various forms of downtown revitalization, ranging from streetscape improvements to economic development strategies designed to strengthen downtown business districts. In recent years, downtown revitalization efforts have been successful in stimulating investment in each of these communities with the exception of the Town of Indian Head.

“Smart Codes” enable more flexible building code regulations that promote “in-fill” re-development. By encouraging investment in existing communities, the reuse of old buildings and the conversion of old buildings to new uses promotes neighborhood conservation, a primary “Smart Growth” goal. The development of “Smart Codes” are designed to remove code barriers that are counterproductive for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic and other structures.

County Level Policy Measures

Charles County

Two elements or chapters of the 1997 Charles County Comprehensive Plan establish County policies for stewardship of both Natural/Environmental resources and Historic/Cultural resources in the County. The overall goal stated in the plan in its Natural Resource Protection Chapter is to “Protect the natural resources and enhance the environmental features of the County”. The overriding goal of the plan section devoted to Historic/Cultural Preservation is to “Preserve and enhance the County’s rich cultural and historic heritage.

A number of programs and implementation strategies, including the County’s “Stream Valley Management and Protection Program” have served to implement these broader goals. They include:

- Establishing a Resource Protection Zone (RPZ) in 1992 as a zoning overlay district to protect streams and their buffers from development.

- Establishing Protection Measures for habitats of threatened and endangered species both within and outside the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.
- Working with organizations and programs to acquire conservation easements on farmland and sensitive natural area environments.
- Revisions to the County subdivision regulations in 1996 to include provisions requiring the identification and protection of historic and archeological resources as part of the development approval process.
- Exploring programs to acquire development rights, scenic easements, and fee simple lands for protection of critical historic viewsheds and vista's like the existing Mount Vernon viewshed protection program.
- Promoting the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including bed and breakfast facilities, country inns, visual art centers or other appropriate uses in compatible locations.
- Investigating the creation of local historic overlay zones to protect significant County resources.
- Creating a Highway Corridor Overlay Zone to protect the aesthetic and visual character along major county highway corridors.

The County's Maryland Greenways Program identifies a number of established and potential ecological and recreational greenways located in the County that serve, or have the potential to serve, as vehicles for land preservation and stewardship, including Gilbert Swamp Run, the Mattawoman Creek Greenways, Nanjemoy Creek, the Patuxent Regional Greenways, the Potomac River Greenways, and the Zekiah Swamp. Additional information on existing and potential greenway trails in the Charles County can be found in the Linkages Section of this Plan.

Of the county's total land area of approximately 295,640 land acres, fifty-six percent, or 165,559 acres, are zoned agricultural. Agricultural lands dominate the southwest and eastern portions of the county. The county has recently strengthened its participation in the state's agricultural preservation program and the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program by requiring the use of TDRs for any proposed townhouse development. The county has approximately 3,000 acres of county or municipal parkland, while the state and federal governments have approximately 12,432 acres of parkland. Of the state and federal government parkland, about 50% is considered by the county to be active recreational land. The county adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 1997 that notes an increased demand for trails and opportunities for greenways connections between park facilities and resource lands. The 1999 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan identified waterfront access, development of regional facilities, and hiker/biker trails as areas where the county needs to provide more opportunities.

Perhaps most important, the Charles County Comprehensive Plan clearly identifies a "Development District at the Northern end of the County wherein 75% of the County's future development is to be located. Since the vast majority of lands designated within the Heritage Area boundary are located outside this development district, this important goal should serve to

minimize development pressures and changes to the County landscape within the designated Heritage Area Boundary.

In September 2002, Charles County published the Report of the Charles County Rural Commission. The Commission was organized in 2000 to study the growth management issues in the rural area. They reviewed and made recommendations on a menu of current and proposed land preservation strategies including transferable/purchase of development rights, clustering, large lot zoning, land trusts, protection of rural roads and land preservation goals.

Since the adoption of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, the County has embarked on an effort to achieve its historic and cultural preservation goals. In 1998, Charles County was awarded a 5-year grant from the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to conduct a historic sites survey of Charles County's existing structures. The first three phases of the project have been completed. The final phase will include the completion of a National Register Multiple Property Nomination, designating those properties most worthy of preservation. In addition to the fieldwork portion of the project, the County has initiated several policy changes within the department to assure that historic resources are taken into consideration as part of the development review process. Subdivision plans as well as the siting of communications towers are now reviewed by staff for their impact on historic resources. In 2002, the Historic Preservation Advisory Council was established and charged with developing a comprehensive historic preservation plan for Charles County. The plan is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2003. Charles County is also participating in the Maryland Historical Trust's Preservation Incentives for Local Government (PILG) Program. The program allows Charles County to expand its preservation activities and advance toward the goals outlined in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan including promoting adaptive reuse of historic buildings, programs for the acquisition of development rights, scenic and historic easements, rehabilitation incentives, increased public education, and the use of local historic overlay zoning, along with the expansion of heritage tourism opportunities within the County and the region.

Calvert County

Calvert County is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and has established a County Historic Preservation Commission. In FY 2002, Calvert County was awarded a \$15,000 CLG grant for Phase I of a cultural conservation study of the county's tobacco culture after the State buyout. An FY 2004 CLG grant is being prepared for Phase II of this study.

The County planning program is designed to encourage the identification, preservation, and restoration of sites and structures having historic significance, as well as control development in their vicinity to protect their visual character. This includes establishing an inventory of historic and scenic roads and developing a plan for protection of scenic qualities. This goal and others are discussed further in each of the land use classifications and the land use element sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

The County's Comprehensive Plan also identifies a series of open space sites and greenways, primarily along the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River. The plan calls for town centers to serve as focal points for community-based recreation and for development of a network of county-wide parks featuring unique natural, cultural, and historical sites. Types of greenways in the county vary widely. Some are designated scenic roadways, with or without adjacent bikeways. Others are off-road trails for horseback riding, bicycling, hiking, or a combination. Additional greenways are waterway corridors that provide opportunities for boating or are simply wildlife and scenic corridors.

The Historic Preservation element of the County's planning program has established and maintained a stewardship objective since 1983 to "strengthen the existing historic preservation program to ensure that Calvert County's historic and cultural legacy will continue to help shape and define the unique character of the County".

The County's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, adopted in 2000, also identifies the "preservation and protection of valuable natural, agricultural, cultural and historical resources as one of its key purposes. This plan notes that much of the enjoyment and pleasure that residents and visitors derive from Calvert County stems from the County's unique rural landscape, which includes old towns and historic churches and homes. These features help define the character of the County and set it apart from other areas. A Heritage 2003 Plan prepared for the Calvert County Historic District Commission also supports stewardship efforts and defines its purpose to preserve the historic rural character, early structures, cultural landscapes and archaeological sites within the County.

Of the county's total land area of 138,000 acres, 57,000 acres are zoned as either Farm Community Districts (FCD) or Resource Preservation Districts (RPD). Sixty-five percent of the county's total acreage is either farmland, woodland, parkland, and open space. The county has recently increased the amount of funding for its farmland preservation efforts and has received statewide recognition for its strategy to reduce buildout. The 1990 County Comprehensive Plan established a goal of preserving 40,000 acres of prime farm and forestland. Through local efforts and participation in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, the county has protected over 20,000 acres of prime farmland to date. In 1994, the county's Board of Commissioners adopted an innovative revolving loan fund to help finance non-profit organizations working to preserve open space. Local land trusts have utilized this service in acquiring lands.

Taken as a whole, Calvert County's Farm Community Districts and Resource Preservation Districts form a nearly continuous band of prime farm and forest land along the Patuxent River; surround all of Calvert County's navigable creeks; include a 6,000 acre undisturbed natural area surrounding Parkers Creek, provide a greenway corridor connecting the Patuxent River to the Chesapeake Bay, and form a greenbelt around the county seat of Prince Frederick. These areas contain the County's best farm and forestlands, its most historic houses and barns and its most environmentally sensitive areas, and most of the Resource Conservation District lands within the

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The County's goal is to preserve 80% of the lands in the 9,000-acre Rural Legacy Area that connects Battle Creek and Parker's Creek, a designated ecological greenways, within the next five years. Additional information on Calvert County greenway trails can be found in the Linkages Section of this Plan.

In 1993 the County instituted a mandatory clustering program. Under the terms of this program, residential development density remains the same but 50% to 80% of the lands in all new subdivisions is preserved as open space. In the first five years the program preserved 3,800 acres of land through conservation easements.

St. Mary's County

Like Calvert County, St. Mary's County is a Certified Local Government and has also established an Historic Preservation Commission. In its 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the County included in its goals and objectives for Land Use and Growth Management the promotion of "balanced heritage activities and programs that capitalize on the natural, recreational, historical and cultural resources of the county and the region, including implementation of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area plan." Other initiatives discussed in the Plan include the development and maintenance of an inventory of natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources in the county, and amending the county's development review process to include a review of all development proposals by the Historic Preservation Commission for potential adverse impacts on historic resources. The county also proposes a review of all structures fifty years or older that are slated for demolition for historic significance; the encouragement of compatible development in designated historic districts; the establishment of performance standards to prevent negative impacts on surrounding properties; and requiring the identification of cemeteries, burial grounds, and archeological sites on a property prior to any disturbance of the site.

The County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives also include promoting the designation of historic sites and districts and the adaptive reuse of historic structures. Recommended policies include seeking and supporting increased opportunities for conservation, preservation, and maintenance of heritage resources through official state and federal recognition of county sites and of Southern Maryland as a "Heritage Area", providing local tax incentives for the preservation of important and significant historical and cultural resources, adopting design guidelines and appearance codes to be applicable to all locally designated historic sites and districts, and encouraging participation in natural, historic and cultural preservation through education and public awareness, via environmental and heritage education programs for adults and children.

There is growing support in the county for preserving environmentally sensitive areas and for protecting farmland from development. When asked in the County's 2000 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan questionnaire to rate the importance of recreation and resource protection actions one of the two top-rated items was preserving environmentally sensitive areas. The third ranked action was protecting farmland from development. Increasing activity among environmental and

preservation-oriented groups and organizations is further evidence of strong interest in resource protection. In November, 1997, a community forum on the environment was held at St. Mary's College and the "Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust", the County's first land trust, was formed.

The County's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan incorporates the Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, policies, and actions for agricultural land, preservation of rural character, protecting sensitive resources, and protecting historic and cultural resources, and includes specific implementation actions that respond to some of the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations, including:

(excerpted from the Plan)

- **Organization:** Assign responsibility for overseeing implementation of the land preservation components of the LPRP. The Recreation and Parks Board could sponsor biannual meetings with relevant departments boards and commissions to ensure that the LPRP's land preservation and resource conservation recommendations are addressed.
- **Agricultural Preservation:** Implement the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for protecting and promoting agriculture. The recommendations, if implemented, will help protect agricultural land, and support and promote the agricultural industry.
- **Land Conservation:** Support the efforts of the newly formed Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, and participate in other land conservation programs and activities. Continue to pursue applications for funds under the state's Rural Legacy program. The program may be expanded because the response, in terms of the number of applications for funds, has been very strong.
- **Environmentally sensitive areas:** Implement the Comprehensive Plan's policies and actions for protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Incorporate Natural Heritage Areas and county-designated unique natural areas into the development review process. Determine whether specific management plans or protection measures are needed to assure protection of privately owned unique natural areas. Each area should be reviewed to determine what measures are needed. These might include acquiring easements through programs such as Rural Legacy, agreements with property owners on management plans, or acquisition. Encourage participation in environmental programs to tap into the strong local interest. The LPRP questionnaire indicated strong support for preserving environmentally sensitive areas. Programs could include environmental clean up and education. Support the Lower Potomac and Patuxent River Watershed Tributary Strategy teams. Reevaluation of the strategies is underway and may result in revised recommendations for state and local action.
- **Historic Preservation and Culture:** Pursue the Comprehensive Plan's recommended actions for historic preservation. These relate to reviewing development activity that might adversely affect historic resources, and establishing historic district overlay areas. Revise the Historic Area Districts section of the Zoning Ordinance (Section 38.4). Ensure that preservation specialists review information about historic sites that is presented on subdivision plats. This can help reduce or avoid impacts to historic resources. A proposed master plan under Phase V would develop a strategy to guide the Historic Preservation Commission's future actions. Continue to support the efforts of the

Southern Maryland Heritage Area Partnership towards designation of areas of Southern Maryland as a Recognized and Certified Heritage Area. Complete planned development projects at county-owned museums: boardwalk at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park; development of a children's museum at the Little Red Schoolhouse; and a ferry between Colton's Point and St. Clement's Island.

The central goals of St. Mary's County's Master Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Plan are to protect the County's rural economy and character. County Commissioners are in the process of developing a farmland preservation plan with a full range of tools to assist them in achieving their rural land protection goals, including a Critical Farms Program, which will create an interest-free revolving loan fund for young farmers purchasing farms and other qualifying farmers committing to sell easements.

As of 2003, 57 agricultural preservation districts in the County, comprising approximately 6,453 acres, were enrolled in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program. Of the total acres enrolled, easements have been sold on 41 farms comprising roughly 4,723 acres, ensuring permanent protection from development. The county's commitment to agricultural preservation is underscored by State certification of the county's Agricultural Land Preservation Program in 1996 and the adoption of a local property tax credit on land and improvements enrolled as an agricultural district, effective July, 1998.

The County is also working with the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust on developing the St. Mary's River Rural Legacy Area to protect the St. Mary's River watershed. Building on the work of the St. Mary's River Project at St. Mary's College of Maryland to study water quality in the river, the Land Trust is developing with the County and with the support of Historic St. Mary's City, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and the River Lands Institute, a broad land protection strategy to protect and improve water quality over time and preserve critical viewsheds, historic landscapes, and valuable cropland and woodland.

Approximately 43,700 acres of the County (18% of its total land area) is located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The vast majority of these lands are designated Resource Conservation Districts wherein future development is limited to 1 unit per 20 acres. This classification provides some assurance that the County's shoreline will retain much of its rural character and pastoral qualities in the future. Critical area lands are estimated to represent over 35% of lands located within the designated Heritage areas of the County reflecting efforts to delineate lands within the heritage area where initial stewardship efforts are already in place.

The 1996 Maryland Greenways Atlas identified five potential greenways in St. Mary's County. Each holds promise to provide protected corridors of open space that allow a multi-faceted approach to land conservation. These prospective greenways include:

- McIntosh Greenway, along McIntosh Run in and near Leonardtown
- Patuxent Regional Greenway running along the Patuxent River to Greenwell State Park.

- Potomac River Greenway
- St. Mary's River Greenway; and
- Washington, Potomac, and Chesapeake Rail Trail

Each of these Greenways will be located in portions of the designated heritage area and will support both needs for protection of rural character and environmental quality. In some cases they will also augment the available trail network to support visitor needs. Some efforts are underway towards developing these greenways. A county bikeway from Charlotte Hall to California along the old railroad right-of-way was included in the County's FY 1999 budget, for development in 2002. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is working with the County on a greenway connection between Greenwell State park and Sotterly Plantation. More information on the greenway trails program in St. Mary's County can be found in the Linkages Section of this Plan.

Municipal Level Efforts

Town of Leonardtown

Designated a target investment zone, the Town of Leonardtown has already made great strides in accomplishing an economic resurgence in recent years. After a period of decline, the downtown area has rebounded in activity with few, if any vacant storefronts, new restaurants, new court facilities, and ongoing downtown construction activity. Recent changes include context sensitive re-investment in downtown structures, development of new uses including offices, restaurants, renovation of the Courthouse (originally constructed in 1901), and substantial investments in public streetscape improvements. The Town has also become the health center of the County as medical facilities locate near St. Mary's Hospital, and the legal center. Golf Course facilities are currently being developed in association with the "Tudor Hall Resort and Conference Center" planned for construction in a location of virtual adjacency to the downtown area over the next few years. Coupled with municipal policies pertaining to restoration and revitalization of the Downtown area, Leonardtown presents a strong policy framework for the present and future protection and enhancement of heritage resources.

Stewardship activities, for the Town of Leonardtown do not relate to protection of land resources so much as maximizing utilization of land resources in such a way as to maintain a healthy downtown, and small town character. Recently implemented Downtown Design Guidelines, and ongoing streetscape improvements reflect the towns commitment to stewardship. The town is currently working to re-develop its waterfront on Breton Bay to include a mix of uses that will further support downtown activity and future conference center facility improvements..

Town of Indian Head

The term “end of the road” has been used to describe the Town and has led to a reputation or attitude that leads one to believe that not much is happening in the community. A stagnation of commercial activity in the community over the years and the inability to draw new development has been largely influenced by recent development pressures in nearby areas of Charles County coupled with road improvements to MD Rt. 210 and MD Rt. 228 to the north which have created new regional areas of commercial development. These new centers of commercial activity, notably Bryan’s Road Town Center, and surrounding growth have had a significant impact on the Town by drawing away its economic viability to larger commercial nodes which serve a more central area of the regional population.

In the face of these challenges, the town is working to establish a viable downtown improvement program, implementing many of the recommendations for downtown improvement identified by a study performed by Hyatt-Palma in recent years. The town is also working to better utilize its Potomac River shoreline as a recreational asset, to generate economic activity, and to strengthen the town’s image as a waterfront community.

Designation as a target investment zone (TIZ) within the context of this Regional Heritage Tourism initiative should provide substantial opportunity to foster investment and activity in the Town that can stimulate re-investment and support town stewardship efforts. Key facilities, if developed, (see description of Indian Head TIZ) could foster the “quality community” image the Town seeks to promote and stimulate re-development and investment in a targeted Smart Growth Community consistent with County and State policy initiatives. These initiatives can, in turn, provide additional financial resources through participation of various State and Federal agencies enjoined to support the rebirth of the Town. Absent such support, the Town of Indian Head will find it much more difficult to husband town resources to achieve its stewardship objectives through community re-investments.

The Town of Indian Head includes several districts eligible for National Register designation, some of which are located at the Naval Surface Warfare Center.

Town of La Plata

Sensitive areas within La Plata’s town limits include streams and buffers, 100-year floodplains, and steep slopes. The Town’s Comprehensive Plan Sensitive Areas element establishes policies for protecting these areas and the wildlife that inhabit them, and includes initiatives to educate the public and private sectors about the community’s role in resource stewardship. Some of these policies include:

- Prohibiting development where sewage treatment will not be a part of the central collection and treatment system operated by the Town;
- Encouraging the linking and connection of forest required for preservation so that contiguous wildlife habitat can be created;
- Establishing minimum setbacks for development, in the form of natural buffers;

- Requiring urban BMP's for development projects having reasonable potential to adversely affect the headwaters of the Zekiah Swamp, other important stream valleys, and surface water impoundment areas;
- Developing and fostering an environmental stewardship ethic to be promoted in the public and private sectors through workshops, education and outreach, and volunteer programs
- Encouraging the use of natural buffers for stream, slope and floodplain systems as a preferred protection technique over engineering solutions

La Plata's stewardship goals extend to its downtown area, and include increasing open space and pedestrian/bicycle routes to enhance alternative and environmentally friendly modes of transportation and minimize adverse affects of heavy automobile traffic, including:

- Upgrading the park system by improving existing parks and creating new ones;
- Creating a system of bicycle routes and sidewalks throughout town;
- Establishing sidewalks and street lighting on all Town streets;
- Establishing an environmentally friendly system of open space for public use.

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element also includes goals that promote resource protection and preservation, including providing for more efficient development techniques such as clustering, developing innovative methods to protect and preserve sensitive areas and contiguous wildlife habitat, and encouraging residential densities that are consistent with Smart Growth.

On April 28, 2002, a sizable portion of the Town was damaged or destroyed by an F4 category tornado, including an estimated seventy percent of the businesses located within the Town's Central Business District and Commercial Highway District. The Town is preparing a strategic plan to rebuild the downtown, and has completed a detailed market analysis to determine the market demand for downtown retail and office space. During the next year, the Town will help to guide specific land use and private investment decisions so that property owners rebuild at higher densities with a greater mix of compatible uses. The plan will also outline strategies for long-term economic development and downtown revitalization.

In September, 2002, La Plata adopted the County's first Historic Preservation Ordinance, establishing a formal historic preservation commission and setting criteria for designating future historic landmarks and districts. The new ordinance was proposed by residents of the Oak Avenue area of La Plata, one of the areas most heavily damaged by the April tornado. Some of La Plata's best examples of Victorian architecture are located here, and homeowners hope adoption of the new ordinance will allow them to take advantage of State tax incentives to restore their homes.

North Beach and Chesapeake Beach

Both North Beach and Chesapeake Beach have developed or updated Comprehensive Plans in recent years that establish stewardship of community environmental resources as objectives. Both are working to diversify their economies by providing amenities that appeal to the heritage traveler. The future development of the proposed Bayside History and Nature Museum in North Beach, as well as the Fishing Creek Trail System will greatly enhance stewardship efforts in both communities by providing greater opportunities for visitor and resident appreciation of environmental resources through interpretive trail exhibits. Both communities encompass wildlife habitat in their tidal marshlands which are home to native wildlife and host to seasonal migrations. Designation of these communities as target investment zones will facilitate investment in a number of projects that will further stewardship objectives.

The town of North Beach has established an Historic Preservation Commission, which has developed design standards for the town that assist historic property owners with the rehabilitation of old buildings. The design standards also serve as guidelines for the construction of new buildings, and provide recommendations for building designs that are compatible with the town's existing public and residential buildings. The Preservation Commission has also developed an Historic Preservation Ordinance which establishes mechanisms to protect historic landmarks, sites and structures within the town, including provisions that require a property owner to file an application for a certificate of appropriateness with the Historic Preservation Commission for permission to construct, alter, reconstruct, move or demolish an historic landmark, site or structure. The Commission also designates Local Historic Landmarks within North Beach, and hopes to sponsor the completion of the survey of North Beach properties begun in 1998. Other future Heritage Preservation Commission programs under consideration include financial incentives for owners to fix up older residential or commercial buildings, and a façade improvement grant for local businesses to improve their store fronts.

The Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum has served as a focus for community history for a number of years. The resources of the Museum promote a sense of identity and a strong connection for the present beach towns to their history. An important part of the mission of the Museum is to provide stewardship to these local historic and cultural resources. Local citizens, as well as support for the town, county, and state have made this landmark a vital part of the community.

Fishing and the demand for water related facilities have maintained the traditional importance of both North Beach and Chesapeake Beach's proximity to the Chesapeake Bay as their most important asset and income resource to support the ongoing stewardship efforts within these two communities. Today, cottages built as summer homes, have been converted to year round residences. Commuters and retirees have settled as permanent residents, not just summer visitors. New construction of homes, ranging from single family to townhouse to condominium to apartment have flourished over the past ten to fifteen years, increasing the population base of both communities. From 1980 to 2000 the population of North Beach has grown from 1504 to over 2,500. The population of Chesapeake Beach has more than doubled over the same period; growing from 1,408 residents in 1980 to 3,180 by the year 2000.

Signs of investment in both communities are evident. The construction of the Water Park in Chesapeake Beach, recent opening of the Twin Beaches Community Health Center, development and re-development of restaurants, service businesses, and a variety of shops catering to both residents and visitors are signs of success and resurgence in both communities. The seven block long waterfront in North Beach has seen substantial investment with construction of the public fishing pier, and a new half-mile-long boardwalk or waterfront promenade and accompanying bike path.

Observations: Summary of Issues

Overall, local government stewardship and preservation and conservation efforts in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area are strong from a policy perspective but vary in their ability to effectively preserve heritage resources and the settings for these resources. The following provides a brief summary of the key issues involved in the protection of heritage resources. They include:

- Growth management;
- Policies for protecting or enhancing historic buildings;
- Policies for protecting cultural landscapes; and
- Policies for enhancing the climate for rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse.

Following is a more detailed discussion of the preservation and conservation policies and implementation programs of the counties, municipalities, and other key management entities in the region.

- Policies for Growth Management:

Growth management is a key issue directly related to the SMHA. As new residents move into the area, the demand for housing will result in the conversion of land from, among other things, farm and forest uses, to residential and related uses such as commercial, service, and employment uses. Accommodating this growth, while at the same time protecting the cultural and natural resources that make-up the setting required to successfully promote Heritage Tourism will be a challenge, especially for each county government.

Projected rates of growth and population increase in each of the three counties are among the highest in the State of Maryland. The land use plans and development regulations for all three counties are designed to discourage high density development in rural areas. These rural areas constitute a large part of the setting for heritage resources. Insensitive

development in rural areas could adversely affect heritage resources, the natural environment, and the general appeal of the area for visitors.

A number of state initiatives will help guide this future growth. These include the 1992 Planning Act, the “Smart Growth” Initiatives, the Critical Areas Law, and the Forest Conservation Act. However, the success of these initiatives will depend largely on the policy implementation and enforcement. For example, growth management in rural areas, in and of itself, may not protect a particularly important scenic vista or historic structure if the developer decides to use the density allocation allowed in a way that adversely affects heritage resources. For this reason, local land use development review procedures should include guidelines that suggest ways to develop in a manner that is sensitive to the particular protection needs of the heritage resources and their settings. In addition, public awareness of the importance of heritage resources will need to be increased. Continual monitoring of growth management policies and regulations in each county used to implement those policies will be required to insure that the spirit and intent of the jurisdiction’s growth management and heritage resource protection goals and objectives are achieved.

Some other incentive-based strategies to re-direct growth away from the designated Heritage Area should be considered. Examples include creation of scenic overlay districts designed to protect viewsheds, transfer of development rights programs (TDR) that permit the transfer of development potential from within the heritage region to locations more appropriate for growth, buffer standards or requirements for development adjacent to key heritage resources, or bonus densities for voluntary compliance with special design standards to protect identified heritage resources, their setting, and other important natural resources.

- Policies for Protecting or Enhancing Historic Buildings:

Each of the counties and incorporated towns have adopted policies that support protecting and/or enhancing historic buildings and places. However, each local government will need to guard against the general tendency for local governments to seek voluntary participation of individual property owners in the designation of historic sites, or to narrowly define or construe what are important historic properties. Such tendencies impede the effectiveness of programs or regulations designed to protect historic resources. Historic preservation ordinances and local historic districts/landmarks all can be used effectively to preserve historic structures.

The ubiquitous tobacco barn is among the most visible types of buildings in the Southern Maryland landscape. Recommendations in this Heritage Tourism Management Plan are

designed to both better catalog and retain this important part of the landscape. (See later discussion of proposed projects to establish a “Barn again” program.)

The “Maryland State Income Tax Credit” available to designated historic buildings and contributing properties in historic districts within the region should be actively promoted. This program creates greater incentives to broaden voluntary participation in reconstruction or re-investment in historic structures. The overall success of the Heritage Tourism Program, as it relates to economic and community revitalization, will also act as an incentive in of itself.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Grant Fund has three programs that assist in the acquisition, restoration, and re-use of historic properties: the *Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program*; the *Non-Capital Historic Preservation Program*; and the *Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Grant Program*. These grant funds are annually appropriated by the State of Maryland. Grants to fund capital projects include acquisition, restoration, and re-use of historic properties. Non-profits, local jurisdictions, businesses and individuals may apply for grant funds but only non-profits and local jurisdictions are eligible for non-capital grants. A 50/50 matching is required from local jurisdictions. The maximum grant awarded is \$50,000 for activities ranging from research and survey work to the development of educational programs and planning. In order to receive assistance, MHT Capital Grants require conveyance of a perpetual historic preservation easement.

MHT also provides loans to non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, businesses and individuals through its Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund. Historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register may acquire funds for rehabilitation or restoration. Funds may also be used to initiate short-term studies, surveys, planning, architectural engineering, or other pre-construction evaluations. Low interest loan amounts average from \$100,000-\$300,000, however, recognized receivers must grant a perpetual historic easement to the MHT.

MHT also jointly administers, with Preservation Maryland, a Special Grant Fund that supplies up to \$5,000 to entities demonstrating special needs not met by other programs, usually priority designated areas. In 1997, heritage tourism development initiatives were chosen under this priority status rating. Preservation Maryland provides grant funds up to \$5,000 and low-interest loans up to \$50,000 to non-profit organizations involved in preservation activities.

In the Fall of 2001, MHT also began providing direct funding assistance to counties to support the expansion of their local historic preservation programs. The Maryland Preservation incentives for Local Governments (PILG) Program, a partnership between the Trust and local governments, provides incentives to help those counties without historic preservation programs establish programs. For counties with historic preservation

programs, incentives are offered to assist in the development of more comprehensive efforts. Under the new initiative, counties, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations will gain access to additional funding as their respective local preservation program becomes more comprehensive. Advised by a working group of heritage preservation professionals, volunteers, and local government representatives, MHT developed a tiered system designed to encourage jurisdictions to take incremental steps toward more comprehensive preservation programs. As a jurisdiction demonstrates a greater commitment to preserving Maryland's heritage resources, it will progress through the tiers. As incentive, MHT will provide increased financial support to these communities as their commitment increases. Similarly, nonprofit organizations in participating jurisdictions will also gain access to increased funding as the jurisdiction's preservation program meets higher standards.

Counties electing to participate will have access to two funding streams. The first may be used to support property acquisition or rehabilitation, survey and inventory activities, educational programs, publications, museum development, and a host of other activities. The second, newly-created funding stream is for non-competitive program support that counties may use to fund staff conducting county historic preservation activities, development or implementation of county survey and evaluation plans, and other eligible activities. Any county that applies and meets minimum standards will receive funding. Project and program support grants will be made on an annual basis.

In the first year of participation, a county will be required to appoint a historic preservation advisory committee (established historic preservation commission (HPC) may serve as a county's advisory committee); designate a historic preservation liaison on the staff of a county agency; and develop a survey and evaluation plan covering a full range of heritage resources including archaeological sites, history museums, cultural landscapes, and living traditions, as well as historic structures and districts. The program support grants may be used to offset staff expenses related to these activities. [Click here](#) for a list of currently-participating counties and their staff contacts.

Non-participating counties do not have access to project or program support grants. At the entry level of participation, counties may apply for project support grants of up to \$50,000. As a county's preservation program grows, the ceiling for project support grants increases to \$75,000, then to \$100,000, and finally to over \$100,000. Similarly, as a county's preservation program grows, program support increases incrementally from a maximum of \$25,000 to a maximum of \$100,000.

- Policies for Protecting Scenic and Cultural Landscapes: Protecting the cultural landscape within the designated Heritage Area is made easier due to the fact that much of the land within the Heritage Area boundary is already afforded protection through public agency ownership or easements restricting development. In addition, the combination of county Critical Areas Programs and sensitive area protection measures provide effective controls

against any intense development activities along the shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and their tributaries. Critical Area law does not allow additional intense development, generally within 1000 feet of the shoreline outside of existing towns and villages.

Current measures to protect cultural landscapes could be strengthened by the adoption of scenic overlay zoning provisions for key corridors that link identified heritage region clusters. Existing steep slope and forest conservation provisions should prohibit wholesale disturbance of these areas but would not necessarily or completely protect the integrity of the vista or viewshed. Extending these efforts to the protection of scenic viewsheds can provide additional means of protecting important open spaces and heritage resources.

Most people appreciate natural and historical resources for their beauty and harmonious characteristics. Scenic viewsheds define resource characteristics based on textures and compatibility with the surrounding environment. As an example, an historic structure seems out of place when it is located between two modern shopping centers. Scenic viewsheds are an important component of the Heritage Area because they add beauty and context to the resources. Virtually all participants in the SMHA public workshops expressed a strong desire to see natural scenic beauty protected. The conservation of scenic viewsheds is recommended as a strategy to accomplish overall heritage resource protection goals and objectives.

The first step in protecting scenic viewsheds is to establish community consensus on what heritage resource scenery should be protected. These results then can be used to designate areas for protection. During the past few decades, landscape architects have pioneered a number of methods to survey and evaluate cultural and rural historic landscapes. The National Register criteria for evaluating rural historic landscapes is a primary source for determining significance and integrity, along with community participation (see National Register Bulletin 30: "Guidelines for Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes"). Some of these methods rely primarily on the trained eye of expert landscape architects, historians, and planners, but others place a heavy emphasis on community participation. Although many methods include a large degree of subjectivity, some may be very useful in delineating scenic views for protective status within the SMHA. Visual qualities, important and contributing viewsheds, as well as unique natural features, all combine to form an evaluation system to determine the best scenic viewsheds. Designated scenic viewsheds will provide enjoyment for tourists and residents alike visiting SMHA. (See Appendix: Criteria for Scenic Viewsheds)

Protecting the scenic and cultural landscape is also directly related to each County's effectiveness in implementing stated growth management policies. Calvert County's commitment to documenting and protecting historic and scenic roads, as stated in the County's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, demonstrates that the County recognizes the

importance of preserving the scenic landscapes found along its many rural roads and highways as an additional method of preserving overall historic rural character. Charles County addresses protecting historic viewsheds and vistas in its comprehensive plan as well. The Charles County Historic Preservation Advisory Council also includes cultural landscapes in its draft Historic Preservation Plan.

- Policies for Enhancing the Climate for Rehabilitation and/or Adaptive Reuse: The climate for rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse varies in different Heritage Area locations. By and large in all three counties the climate is a positive one for investment in rehabilitation of structures. This is particularly true in the communities of Leonardtown, North Beach, Chesapeake Beach, and Solomons. In each of these communities key public investments in infrastructure improvements have been made to help spur private investment in the downtown areas or community centers. In addition to some of the projects discussed earlier in the “Municipalities” section, the following are examples of projects and plans completed or underway in these towns and other SMHA communities that include revitalization strategies aimed at improving private investment opportunities and encouraging rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. These projects illustrate the positive climate for Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse that exists in the SMHA.

- Town of North Beach Zoning Code: the Town of North Beach is in the process of re-writing its zoning code in an effort to encourage new compatible development and at the same time preserve the small-town character of its original buildings and neighborhoods. Priority items include infill development and upgrading design standards and guidelines.

- St. Mary’s County Housing Authority Lexington Park Plan: an innovative planning tool prepared for the St. Mary’s County Housing Authority, the Plan includes an inventory of all 9,000+ property accounts in the Lexington Park Community Legacy Area. A physical assessment survey was conducted for each property, and the resultant documentation was loaded into a database integrated with GIS. The database and survey allow St. Mary’s County to target properties and neighborhoods for reinvestment and to evaluate the success of area revitalization efforts.

- Revitalization of former SuperFresh Site in Prince Frederick: Calvert County was awarded a 2002 NBDP grant to restore the site of an old SuperFresh supermarket in the Prince Frederick shopping center and convert it to the new Calvert Country Market, a farmer’s market featuring produce and products from Southern Maryland area farmers, artisans and craftspeople, food vendors and merchants. The market opened in June 2002 with excellent attendance and sales, and continued to thrive until its seasonal close in December. Enthusiastic merchants are preparing for another successful season in 2003. (Note: To insure the continued success of this revitalization project and help strengthen the business climate for the new Calvert Country Market and the surrounding business area, the county is working with the Maryland Small Business Development Center

(SBDC) to create a program of education and instruction that will help the small businesses and farms that sell products at the new market learn more about a variety of small business management techniques).

- Renovation of Warehouse for new Business Incubator Facility in Waldorf: Charles County was awarded a 2003 NBDP grant to complete a feasibility study on renovating a former warehouse building in the Smallwood Village Shopping Center into a new business incubator facility. (Note: This dynamic revitalization project, which is being managed cooperatively by the College of Southern Maryland and the Economic Development Commission of Charles County, is intended to promote entrepreneurial activity in Southern Maryland. Fledgling companies admitted to the Business Incubator will be provided with the opportunities, resources, and management training necessary for them to succeed.

- In Charles County, several non-profit agencies have successfully partnered with local government for the rehabilitation of existing public facilities including the recently completed Old Waldorf School and the ongoing rehabilitation of Bel Alton School. As a result of these projects, which have been partially funded by State money, protective preservation easements have been placed on these properties. Recently, Charles County entered into another partnership with the Pomonkey Alumni Association to occupy the remaining portion of Pomonkey High School.

- Most Promising Vehicles for Improving Stewardship of Heritage Resources: There are a number of promising developments in the Southern Maryland Region that will directly affect stewardship of heritage resources. These include:

- Enhancement of exhibits at the “Southern Maryland Heritage Center”.

The National Park Service, with State support, maintains the Southern Maryland Heritage Center as an exhibit at the Thomas Stone National Historic Site in Charles County. The exhibit contains information on heritage resources in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties. This center should be securely integrated into the SMHA plan and can provide opportunities to market a variety of heritage region destinations to visitors and increase awareness, by visitors and area residents alike, of the importance of stewardship of both natural and cultural resources within the region. This federal/state investment in heritage tourism will strengthen the overall heritage area, especially in the Port Tobacco Region and endorsement in the heritage area plan may make the project more competitive for federal funding.

- County Agricultural Preservation Programs.

County Agricultural Preservation Programs have preserved substantial amounts of farmland that are key components of the regions “setting”. Acquisition of easements on farmland through this program has accelerated in recent years. If funding commitments to this program are sustained, the prospects to preserve additional lands through this program will be substantial.

- Rural Legacy Program

The Rural Legacy Program assists local jurisdictions in preserving important resources and open spaces. Each County has been awarded funding to purchase conservation easements on sensitive resource lands. Through future applications for Rural Legacy Program funding each County can continue stewardship efforts through acquisition of easements on additional lands in the region.

- Program Open Space

Program Open Space (POS) was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1969 (Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Articles 5-901-5-911) to assist the state and its local jurisdictions in acquiring land for outdoor recreation and open space. POS has been instrumental in assisting both the Counties and towns in the region in acquisition and development of park facilities in the region. The continued efforts of POS in association with the Southern Maryland Heritage Consortium (see proposed management framework) will help achieve the stewardship objectives for the region.

- Historic/Heritage Preservation Programs

Work with county planning staffs to consider related land preservation and land use issues/programs which might support the heritage area including a heritage area overlay zone with associated design standards, corridor management plans and other areas of development review to preserve key settings, view sheds, and rural/cultural landscapes. Utilize existing programs including Rural Legacy, Community Legacy, GreenPrint, Forest Conservation Ordinance, Scenic Byways, etc. Work with local Historic Preservation Commissions or historic preservation planning staffs in efforts to identify, evaluate, preserve and rehabilitate historic resources. The commissions will be excellent partners for outreach and a logical coordinator for tax credits and other incentive programs.

- Coordinate eco/nature tourism efforts and goals with appropriate environmental organizations currently working on complimentary projects.

