

THE RURAL PATTERN

The rural pattern recommended here has four broad purposes: 1) to help mold the urban pattern into an efficient and pleasant one, 2) to provide and protect large open spaces for the "change of pace" and recreational opportunities needed by present and future generations, 3) to provide a favorable rural environment in which farming, mineral extraction, hunting, fishing and other natural resource activities can be carried on without disruption, and 4) to conserve natural resources and protect the public water supply. Each of these purposes supplements the others. Together they make the rural pattern just as important as the urban pattern.

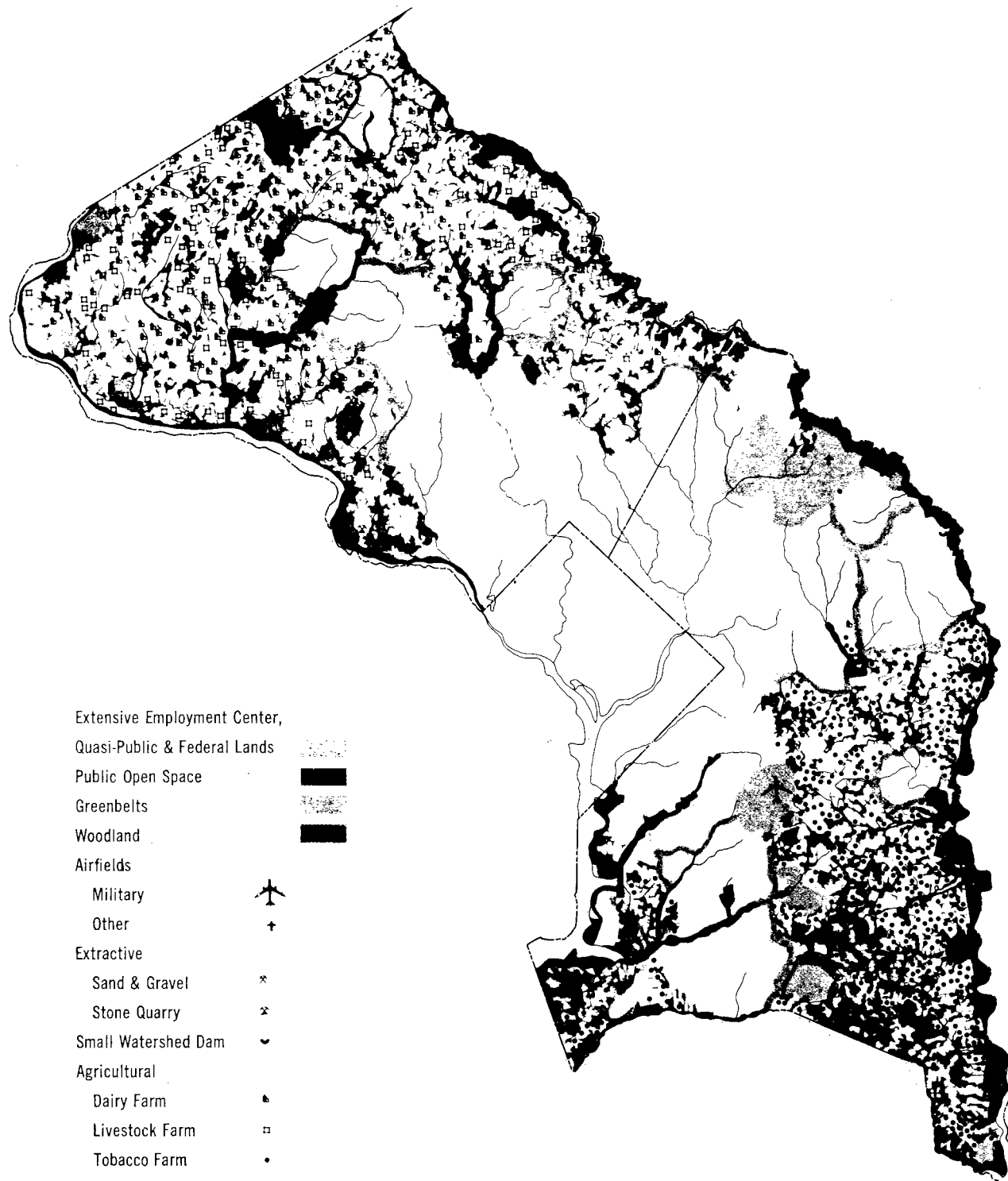
We must reaffirm our dedication to the sound practices of conservation, which can be defined as the wise use of our natural environment—it is, in the final analysis, the highest form of national thrift—the prevention of waste and despoilment while preserving, improving and renewing the quality and usefulness of all our resources.

PRES. JOHN F. KENNEDY













The facing map shows you the types and extent of rural land uses proposed at the edges of urban development forming the transition to a truly rural environment. Establishment of the rural land pattern will be among the chief concerns of the county legislative bodies and the Park and Planning Commission in the next few years. Once the pressure for continuous haphazard urban expansion is eased and properly guided, the rural environment can be patiently and productively nurtured in its own right.

The use of much of the land on the periphery of corridor developments for public ownership and uses will be an enduring buffer between rural and urban uses. The private rural uses recommended at similar locations will be sufficiently profitable to be equally enduring.

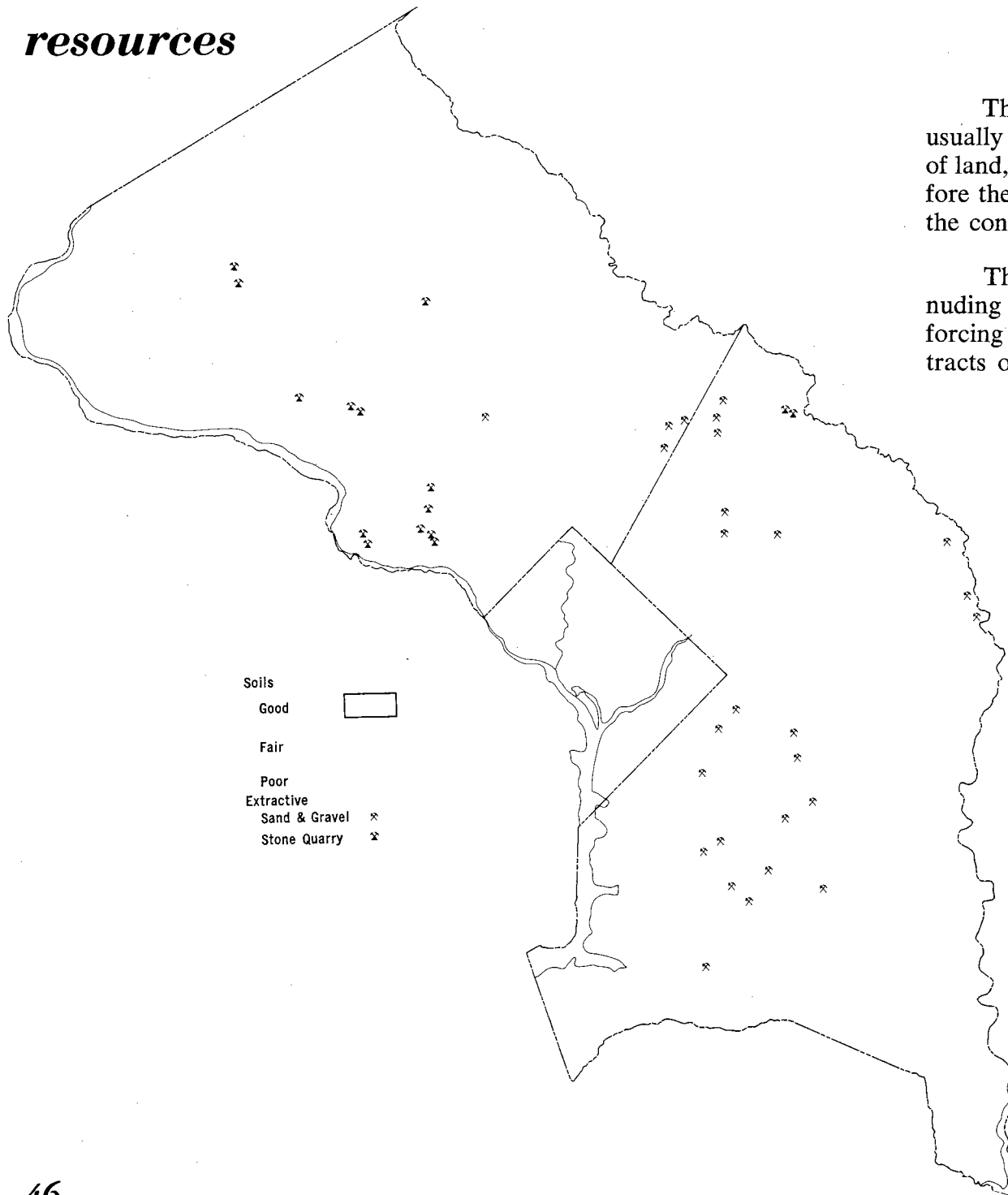
non urban uses



- Extensive Employment Center,
- Quasi-Public & Federal Lands
- Public Open Space
- Greenbelts
- Woodland
- Airfields
- Military
- Other
- Extractive
- Sand & Gravel
- Stone Quarry
- Small Watershed Dam
- Agricultural
- Dairy Farm
- Livestock Farm
- Tobacco Farm

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soils and mineral resources



The many different land uses appropriate in rural areas usually have two things in common: they require large amounts of land, and they are directly related to natural resources. Therefore the well-being and stability of the rural uses depends upon the conservation and proper development of natural resources.

The intrusion of urban uses works against this end by denuding and eroding the landscape, damaging the water supply, forcing speculative prices to the point where large and efficient tracts of land for resource development are difficult or impossible to assemble, and preempting land overlying valuable stone, sand, and gravel deposits. Such problems would not arise if urban uses were kept out of rural areas. Public policy should protect rural areas so that their natural resources will remain useable.

Several natural resources in the Regional District support important businesses now and should be encouraged to continue this role. Among these resource businesses are:

- Crushed Stone
- Sand and Gravel
- Brick Making
- Dairying
- Cattle Breeding and Raising
- Poultry and Egg Production
- Tobacco Farming
- Truck Farming
- Nursery and Greenhouse Operations
- Sod Farming
- Tree Farming

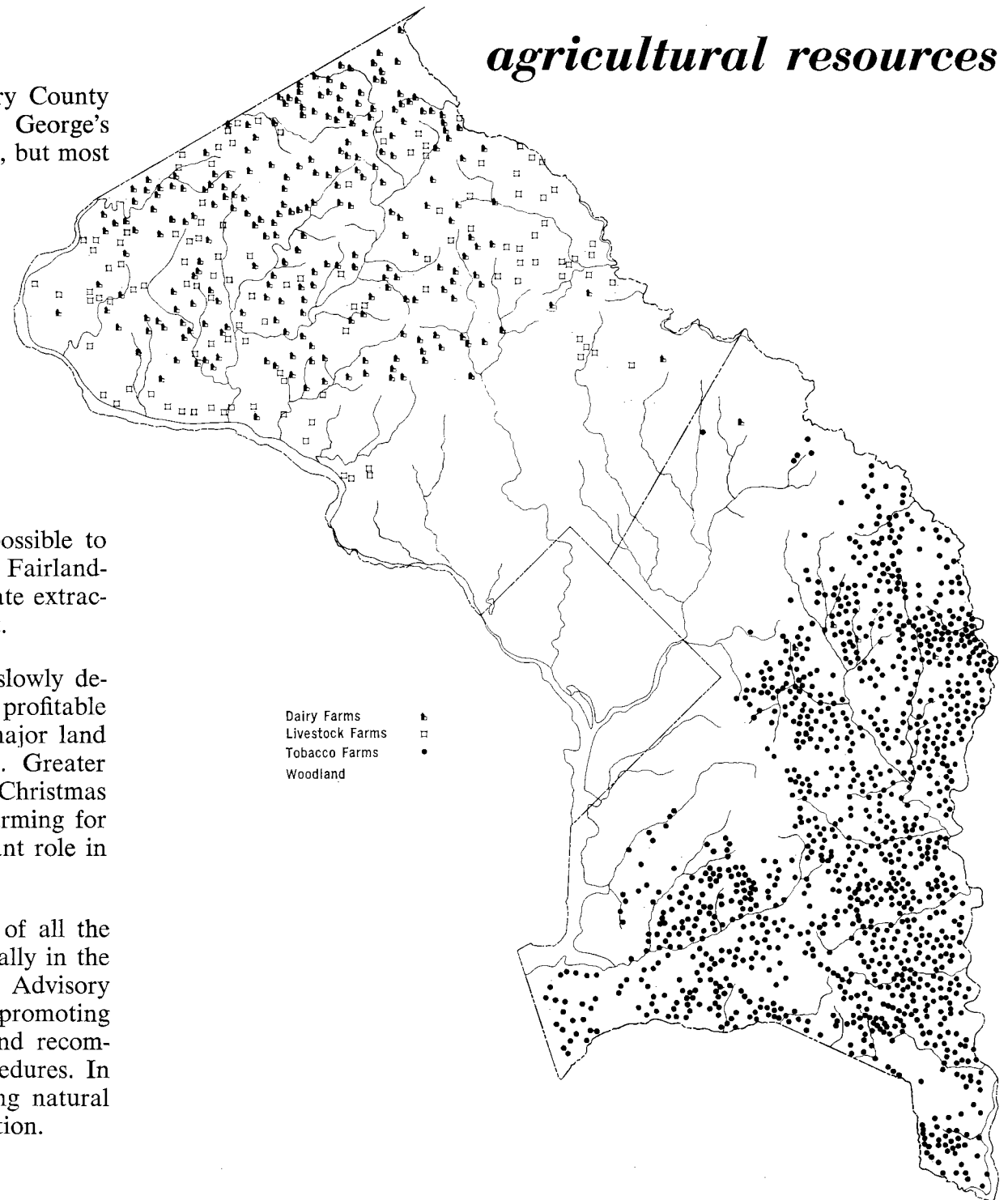
agricultural resources

A few of these such as dairying in Montgomery County and sand and gravel near the Montgomery-Prince George's border occur partly within the projected urban pattern, but most fall within the areas to be retained for rural use.

With a proper sequence of zoning, it will be possible to protect the valuable sand and gravel deposits in the Fairland-Laurel corridor until they are used and then rehabilitate extraction areas for profitable and timely urban development.

Despite great national surpluses of food and a slowly declining agricultural acreage in the Regional District, profitable farming can and should continue to be one of the major land uses in the rural wedges between urban corridors. Greater emphasis should be placed on such crops as sod, Christmas trees, landscaping materials, and cut flowers. Tree farming for lumber and wood pulp may also play a more important role in the agriculture of the Regional District.

To encourage the development and proper use of all the natural resources in the Regional District, and especially in the rural parts, the establishment of a Natural Resource Advisory Committee is recommended. Its duties should include promoting resource development, providing technical advice, and recommending sound conservation and rehabilitation procedures. In sum, it will mobilize every possible means of keeping natural resource business in profitable and harmonious operation.



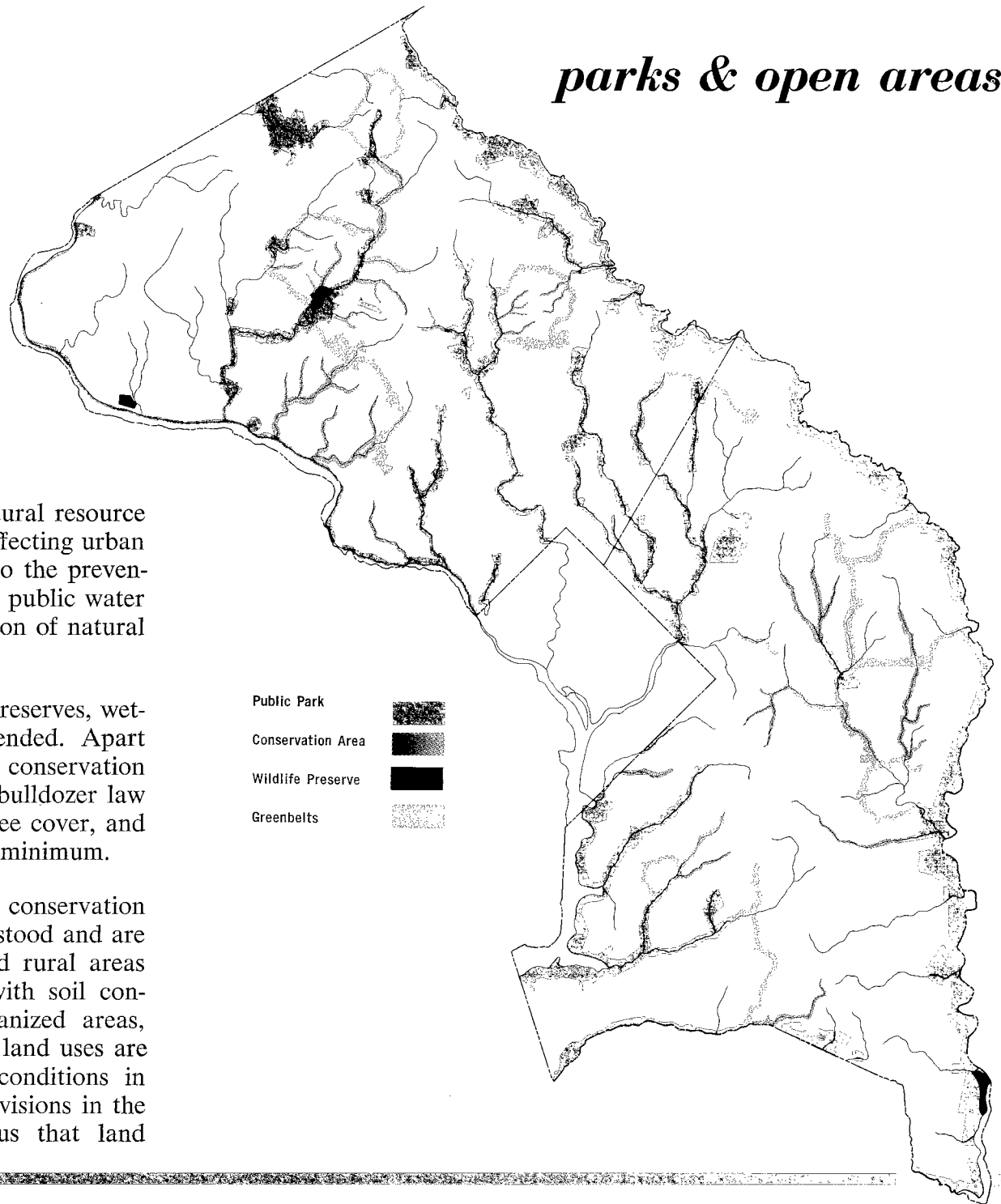
parks & open areas

CONSERVATION

While conservation is an integral part of natural resource development, it is also a subject in its own right, affecting urban as well as rural areas. It is especially important to the prevention of floods and soil erosion, the safeguarding of public water supplies, the protection of wildlife, and the retention of natural values.

A number of existing and proposed wildlife preserves, wetlands, dams, and stream valley parks are recommended. Apart from specific conservation areas such as these, soil conservation districts and general regulations such as the anti-bulldozer law will be useful in keeping the loss of topsoil and tree cover, and the siltation of streams and flood control dams to a minimum.

The principles and devices employed in soil conservation and watershed protective measures are well understood and are successfully practiced on farm lands, forests, and rural areas throughout the country. This is not the case with soil conservation programs for urbanized and semi-urbanized areas, such as are found in the Regional District, where land uses are more complex and intensified. The particular conditions in these "rurban" areas require modifications and revisions in the standard rural-oriented procedures. It is obvious that land



covered to a substantial degree by rooftops and impervious pavements will have vastly different run-off and erosion conditions than land in rural areas, and that new techniques and special ordinances are required by our present-day civilization. Much work remains to be done in this field, though substantial studies of the special problems involved are now being advanced in the Washington area.

A case in point is the Task Force on Urban Siltation, sponsored by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. The Task Force has a twofold purpose: (1) to pinpoint erosion and run-off conditions peculiar to metropolitan areas, and to recommend specific methods of control; (2) to formulate legislative and administrative programs for soil conservation that would become the metropolitan area counterpart to the rural programs of Soil Conservation Districts. Its recommendations are expected to provide useful assistance to conservation programs in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

The construction of two impoundments, soon to be built by the Soil Conservation Service on the upper reaches of Rock Creek near Gaithersburg, marks another significant step towards meeting the watershed protection needs of the Regional District. These two impoundments will be the first ever built under the provisions of the Small Watershed Act (P.L. 566) in such a highly urbanized watershed as Rock Creek. Other P.L. 566 impoundments which may be built within the Regional District include the following: eight in the Seneca Creek Watershed, one on Muddy Branch, one on Watts Branch, two on the Piscataway, and possibly others on the Northwest and Northeast

Branches of the Anacostia. Many of these have been surveyed and planned by the Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers' Potomac Basin Study. They would be multi-purpose impoundments for flood control and recreation. Land stabilization practices are required by law in the watersheds upstream from P.L. 566 structures, and they would provide incidental downstream erosion benefits.

A number of small impoundments, mainly for the containment of silt, will be required on many other streams in the Regional District, where the highly urbanized character of the watersheds precludes silt prevention by the standard land treatment measures recommended for rural areas.

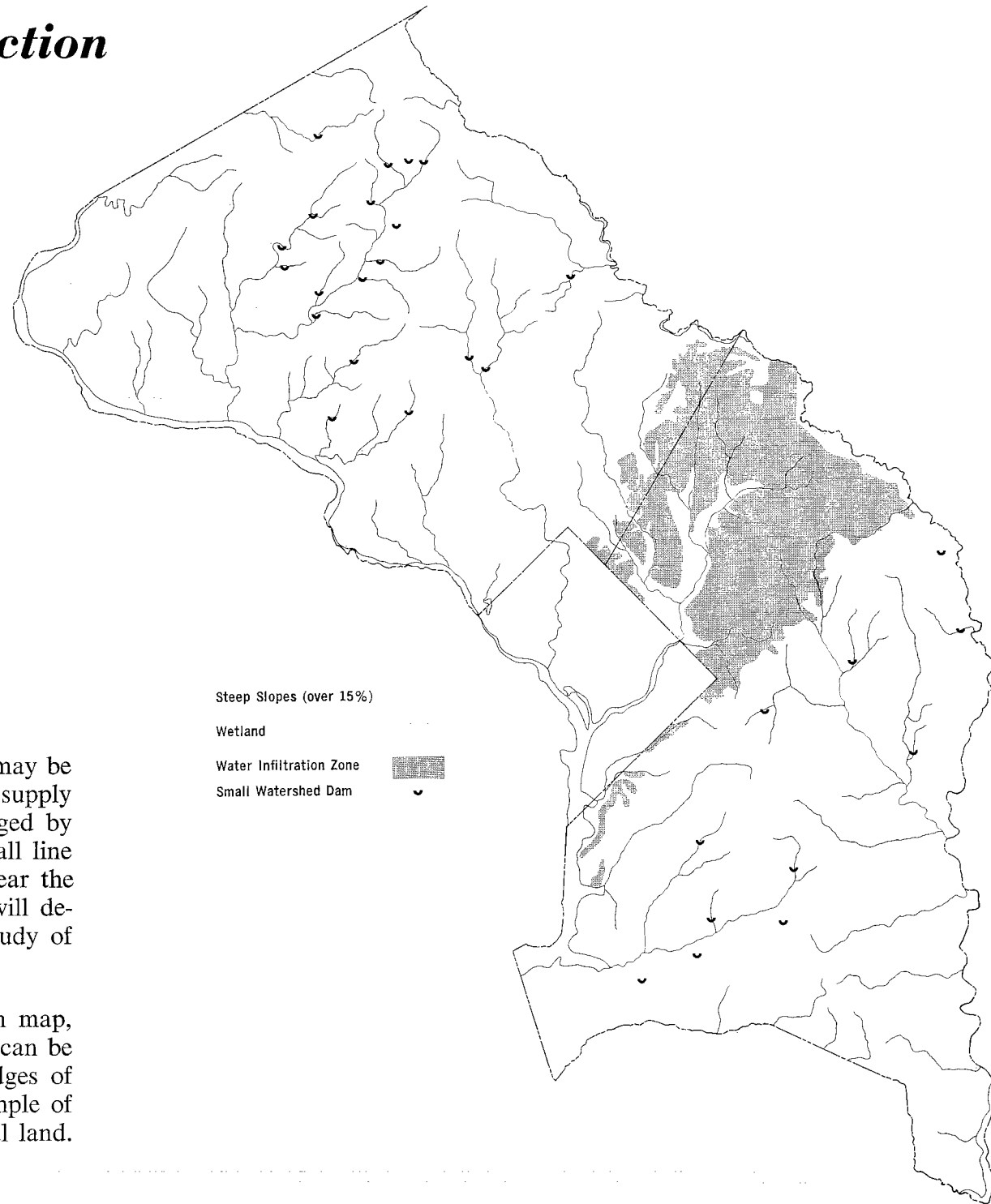
The corridor-wedge plan offers significant opportunities for a new approach to flood and silt control. Small dams to catch silt and control storm water could be located on streams draining run-off from the urban corridor. Highway fills could be used in building such impoundments, and in some cases the highways themselves could form the dam embankments.

It is not the function of the General Plan to specify in any great detail the soil conservation and watershed protection measures that will be employed within the Regional District. These measures will be spelled out as part of the continuing planning process. The Natural Resource Advisory Committee would be expected to take the lead in seeing to it that adequate conservation measures are used in the Regional District, and in bringing about closer coordination between the various federal, state and local programs in this field of endeavor.

watershed protection

An important source of water supply in the future may be the tremendous 150 million gallon per day underground supply in Prince George's County. Since this supply is recharged by rainfall seeping into the ground in the area along the fall line between the Piedmont Plateau and the Coastal Plain near the Montgomery-Prince George's boundary, its usefulness will depend upon protection of the recharge area. Further study of how this might be done is needed.

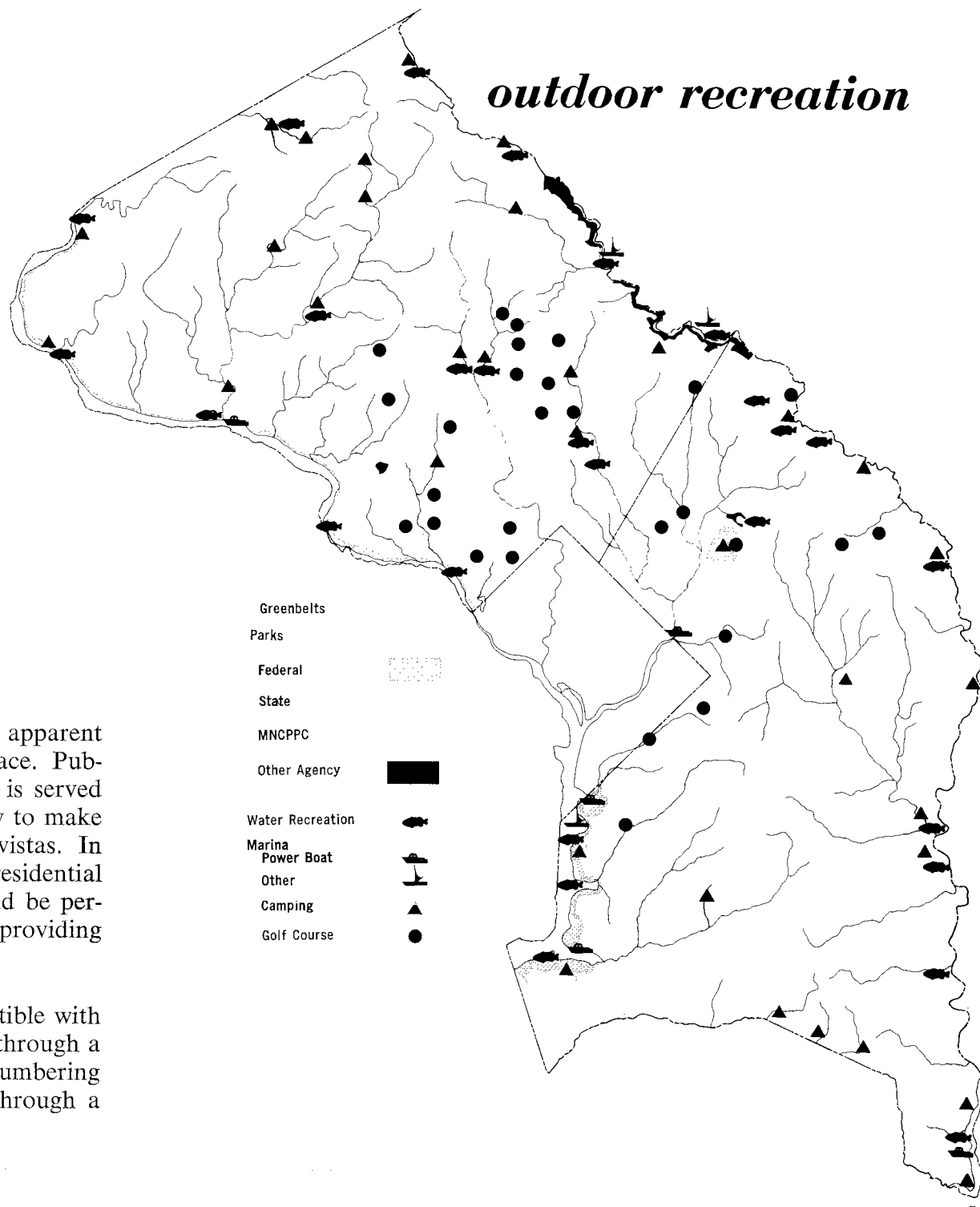
Fortunately, as shown on the watershed protection map, many of the conservation needs in the Regional District can be met by the proper use of public open spaces at the edges of urban corridors. This kind of dual use is just one example of the possibilities for multiple use of open space and rural land.





Other striking examples of multiple use become apparent in the consideration of land for recreation and open space. Public ownership of land is not necessary if the purpose is served merely by looking at scenic vistas; it is only necessary to make sure that private uses of the land will not destroy the vistas. In many cases forestry, agriculture, very low density residential development, and other private uses of the land would be perfectly in accord with preservation of the view and with providing a feeling of open space.

Some types of active public recreation are compatible with private ownership and use of the land. A bridle path through a private farm or forest need not hamper agricultural or lumbering operations, nor will a hiking trail across a field or through a wooded meadow have an adverse effect.



The increasing trend toward recreational use of private land is illustrated by the many lumbering companies which open their forest reserves for picnicking, hunting, and camping.

In a nationwide survey, 518 forest products companies holding 58,140,936 acres of timberlands reported 97.4 per cent of these lands open to fishing, 92.3 per cent open to hunting. Through these lands, the survey showed, wind 37,255 miles of streams from which fishermen may try their luck. The survey showed 107 forest products companies operate 146 parks and 157 picnic areas, virtually all open to the public. Eighty-four companies reported definite plans for developing recreational facilities on their lands in the future. Visits by recreationists to all lands included in the survey were estimated at 6,057,660 a year.

Recreation on those managed forests ranges from skiing in New England to big game hunting in the Pacific Northwest.

*The managed forest as a recreation area is a frontier hardly tapped or realized. While not every commercial acre of timberland is—or can be—open to recreation, it is the managed forest which holds the key to the recreation needs of the future.**

* *Our Forest Bounty*, Washington, D. C.: American Forest Products Industries, Inc., 1961, p. 11. See also an excellent pamphlet from the same source entitled *Why We Must Have Multiple Use Forest Management* (1961).

Many of these recreation uses are provided by public spirited companies, but in order to assure their continuance and expansion in and near the metropolitan area where high land values discourage it, there will be a very definite need for the public to purchase recreational rights on private farm and forest lands as the Maryland Game and Inland Fish Commission is already doing; or in many cases the same purpose could be served by the private owner simply charging recreational fees for the use of his land by members of the general public.

Golf and country clubs, facilities of such organizations as the Isaac Walton League and the Audubon Society, private camps, and other private facilities will also continue to add substantially to recreational opportunities in the Regional District, and they should be encouraged.

Even though private lands can provide a great deal of recreational opportunity and open space, there is a continuing need for expansion of the public park system. This system assures the public complete access to natural areas and to areas developed with specialized recreational features not otherwise available. It makes sure that recreational opportunities are available to the public in all parts of the Regional District, urban as well as rural. Most of the public park system will remain free so that its advantages can be enjoyed by all. And finally, the public park acquisition program can be used at critical points to divide urban areas from rural. Public parks will be a major user of land along the edges of urban corridors and in the rural wedges.



GENERAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

It is inevitable that more than half the land in the Regional District will still be rural in the Year 2000. The income of land owners in the rural area will therefore depend upon enhancement of the rural environment by the preservation and development of natural rural values. This will be a principal task of the Natural Resource Advisory Committee.

The United States Department of Agriculture has recently issued a strong policy statement which can help greatly in achieving the rural development goals of the General Plan. Some of the programs proposed by the Department of Agriculture would

. . . provide for cost sharing with local agencies to acquire and develop recreational facilities around reservoirs, and for easements, cost-sharing, and loans to local organizations for development of selected flood plains, water courses, and other areas for wild-life, game, and recreation uses. And it would authorize loans and technical assistance to groups and individuals in the development of hunting, fishing and other recreational facilities.

*This would generate employment and income in rural areas. It would also support the established and well-regarded watershed program of the Department of Agriculture, providing a nucleus of open spaces for public uses . . . The purpose would be twofold: (1) to effect needed land use adjustments by converting some land, preferably cropland, to recreational uses, and (2) to meet a strongly developing need for more public recreational facilities.**

The demand for forest products will increase in

the years ahead . . . Any major increase in forest lands would be useful particularly for recreation, for wild-life, for general use by a growing population and to provide a reserve.

*Under the program, owners would agree to plant trees on land taken out of crops and to protect and maintain the tree cover on such lands . . . The Government would share the cost of planting and would make annual payments to owners . . . The owner could be permitted to harvest forest products . . . provided such harvesting was carried out according to approved practices.***

The Department's program includes measures to strengthen family farms, but recognizes that "probably the most promising potential source of new economic opportunities in many rural areas is to be found in providing commercial enterprises, and various services connected with outdoor recreation and tourism."*** This is especially applicable to rural areas lying at the edges of major cities.

Rural income protection and expansion is a basic goal of the Department of Agriculture and likewise should be a basic goal of the public authorities in the Regional District. Success in reaching this goal means success in promoting a healthy rural environment for the open space wedges recommended in this General Plan.

* U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, *Food and Agriculture: A Program for the 1960's*, January 30, 1962, pp. 8-9.

Another Department of Agriculture program urges conversion of cropland to trees.

** *Ibid.*, p. 11.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 13.



Some of the many tools that can be employed to achieve successful development of the rural aspects of the General Plan are listed below and explained in *Part II, Carrying Out the Plan*.

Protect and enhance rural values in the Regional District.

Use limited access sewers to give adequate service to urban areas without encouraging urbanization in rural areas.

Establish a Natural Resources Advisory Committee to

--reinforce the purposes of rural zoning.

--make available technical information and advice to encourage the fullest and best use of rural properties, and

--Initiate special studies of rural problems.

Establish new tax policies relating land assessment to zoning, and extending preferential assessment to all open space uses of land. Deny premature subdivisions that would establish large-scale urban development in rural areas.

Use park acquisition to separate rural areas from urban areas.

Purchase public recreation rights and scenic easements to expand open space beyond publicly owned land.

Encourage private land owners in the rural area to provide recreational opportunities for the public under multiple use, income producing arrangements.

Cooperate with and coordinate the numerous Federal, State and local programs for rural development, conservation, and open space acquisition.