



**Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve**  
A National Model of Farm Land and Open Space Preservation

*Photo: Lee Langstaff*



# Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve

## 1980 - 2005

### Our Agricultural Heritage

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is the result of a long and successful partnership between the County and its citizens. The Reserve was created in 1980 to protect farmland and rural communities. It is a unique and valuable resource that has helped to shape the County's identity and heritage. The Reserve is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the County's citizens and the commitment of the County government to protect and preserve our agricultural heritage.



#### The Agricultural Reserve & Rural Open Space

Montgomery County's agriculturally rich Agricultural Reserve was created in 1980 to preserve farmland and rural communities. It is a unique and valuable resource that has helped to shape the County's identity and heritage. The Reserve is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the County's citizens and the commitment of the County government to protect and preserve our agricultural heritage.

#### Montgomery Farm Production 2002

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agervices](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agervices)

| Product   | Number of Farms | Amount Produced (wt)           |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Raw Cattle  | 180             | 3,200 Cows                     |
| Milk  | 275             | 32,000 Hens                    |
| Corn for Grain/Storage  | 40              | 1,900 Tons / 2,800,000 lbs     |
| Wheat   | 41              | 600,000 L                      |
| Hay   | 142             | 20,000 Tons                    |
| Pears, Apples, Christmas Trees, Pumpkins, Soil, Landscaping, etc. | 315             | 3,000,000 lbs<br>4,000,000 lbs |



#### LEGEND

- Agricultural Reserve Boundary
- Rural Open Space Boundary
- State Historical Landmark
- National Historic Landmark
- State Historical Landmark
- National Historic Landmark

## 25th Anniversary Celebration





# The Founding of the Ag Reserve

- Until World War II, farming was the primary industry in Montgomery County, and most of the region was productive farmland.
- Development pressures grew in the second half of the twentieth century and Montgomery County's farms started to disappear at an alarming rate.



- The 1960s- Wedges and Corridors
- The 1970s- A Rural Zone- 1 house/5 acres
- In 1980, Master Plan deliberations established an “Agricultural Reserve” of 93,000 acres (of which 30k is Parks) in the northern and western part of the county.
- 1 house/25 acres with Transfer Development Rights (TDR) to concentrate development elsewhere.

# **The Ag Reserve: A Place with Purpose**

**The Ag Reserve benefits residents throughout the region by providing:**

- **Local Farm Products**
- **Environmental Protection- Air/Water Protection and Habitat**
- **Historic and Cultural Preservation- History in natural context**
- **Economic Advantages**
- **Quality of Life-Recreation, Education, Resource Protection**





A place for...savoring...





...learning





...growing



...conserving





...inspiration



# The Reserve's Impact on the Economy

- The 745 Farms in Montgomery county add nearly \$251 Million to the economy each year.<sup>1</sup>
- Number 1 Pumpkin producer in the state, number 2 berry grower.

<sup>1</sup>2007 Ag Census

- Over 10,000 residents work on County farms.





# Montgomery Farm Products

- Table Crops (vegetables, herbs, berries, fruit)
- Specialty Crops (Christmas Trees, Pumpkins)
- Commodity Crops (Corn, Soy, Wheat)
- Livestock (beef, dairy, pork, poultry/eggs, goats, sheep, alpacas)
- Value Added Products (jams and other preserves, textiles)
- Equine
- Horticultural Products (ornamental trees, plant stock, natural sod, etc.)









Red Wiggler Community Farm







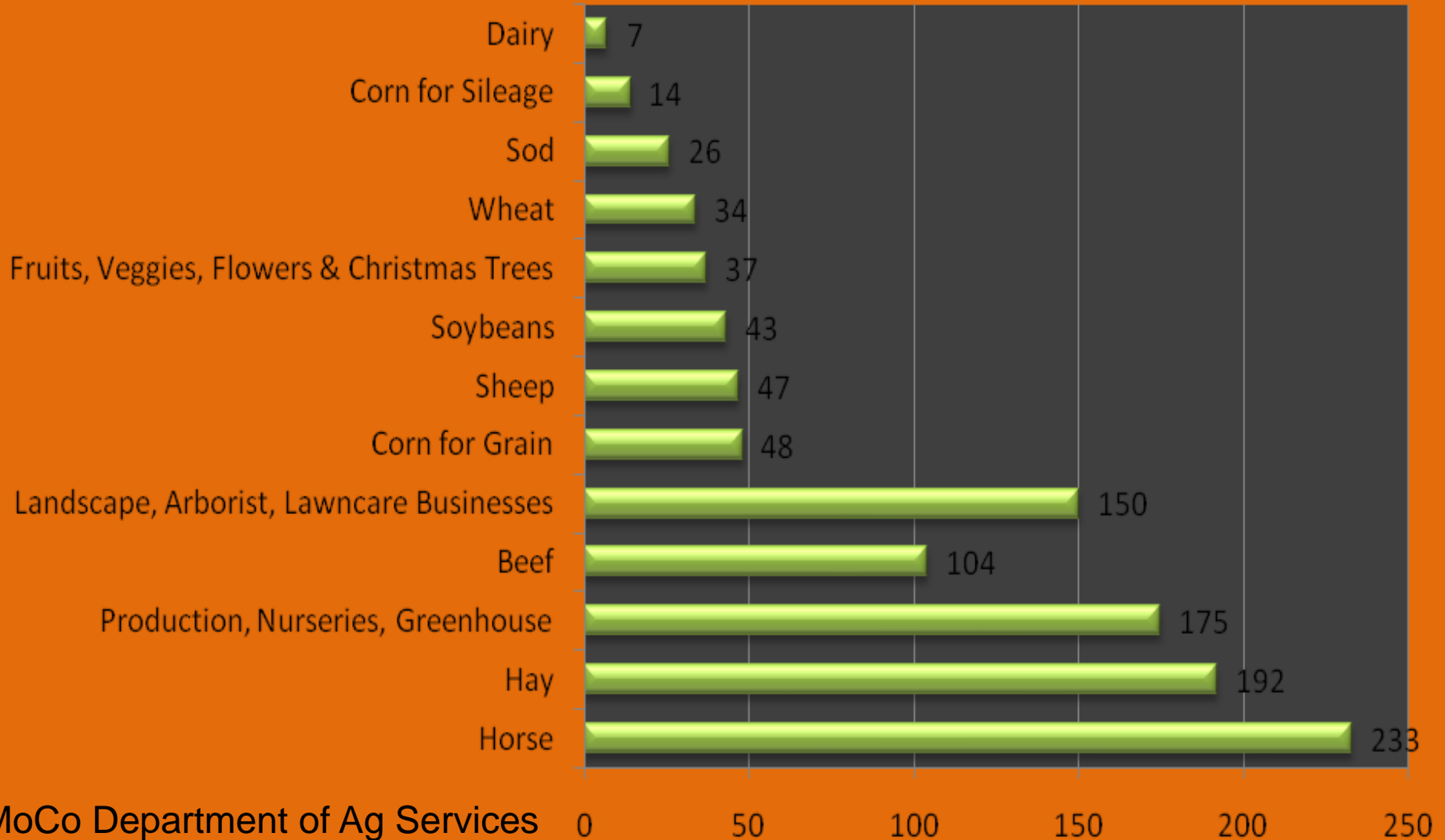






# Montgomery County Farms

Montgomery County Farms





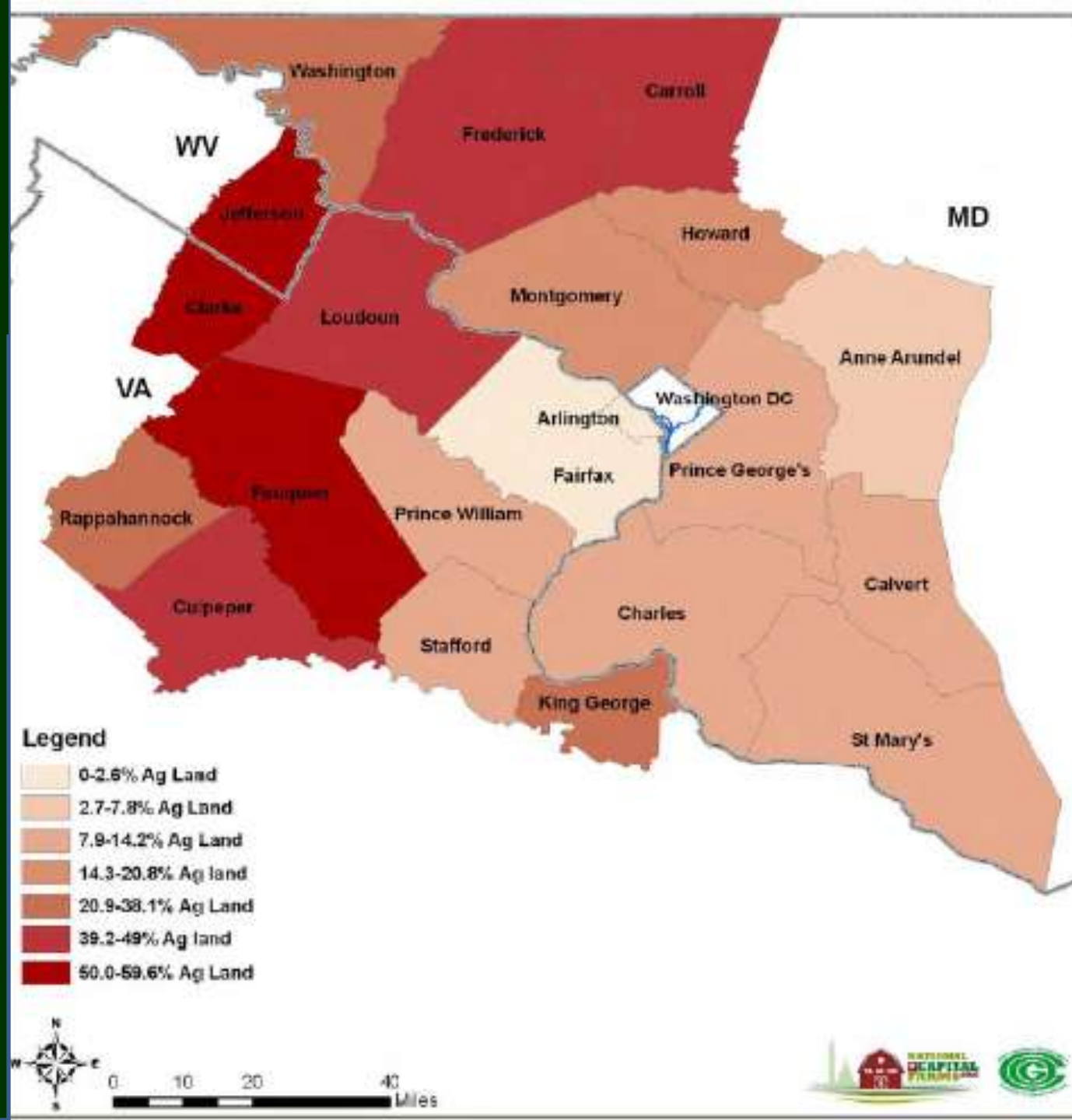
# Percent Ag. Lands Remaining

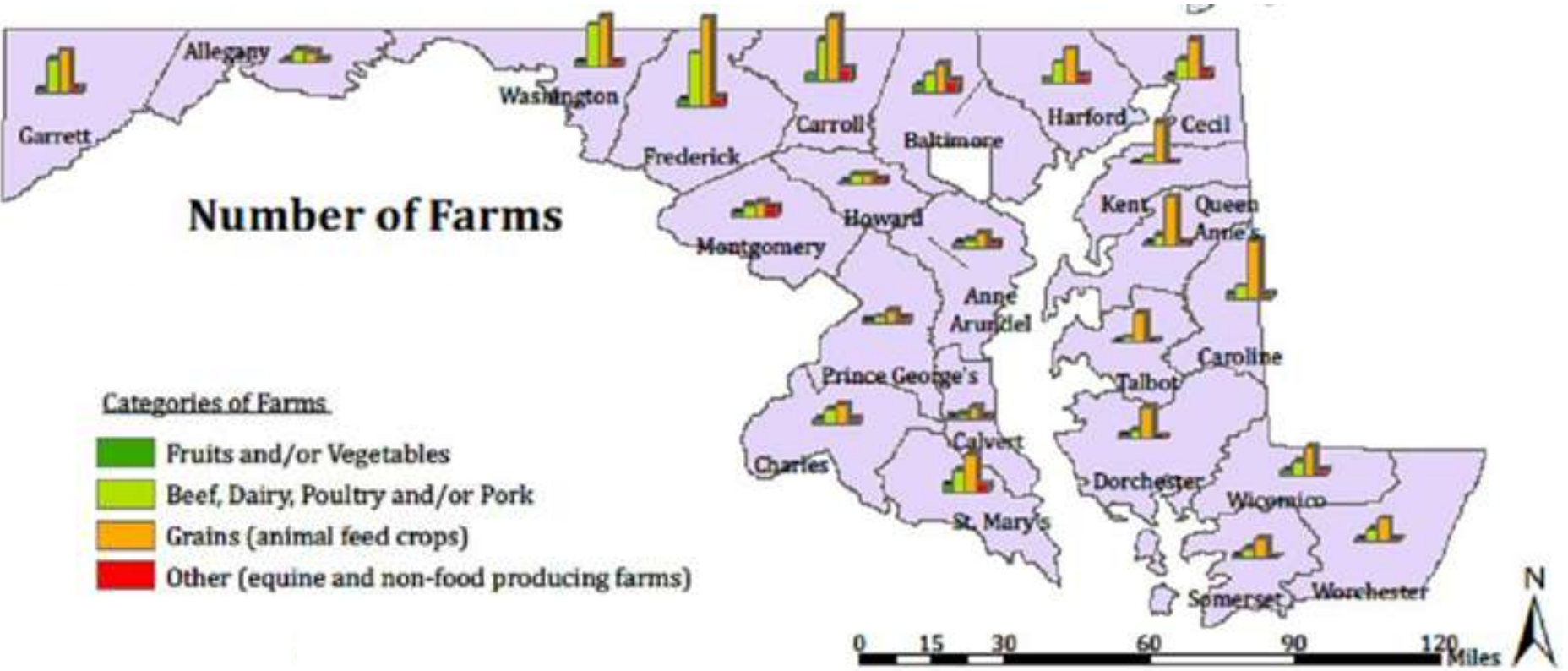
Arlington 0-3%

Montgomery County  
14-21%

Frederick 39-49%

Jefferson 60-70%





Center for a Livable Future,  
Johns Hopkins University 2010



# Maintaining a Working Landscape



Savage Dairy Farm, Mt.  
Ephraim Rd

# Meeting the demand for Local Food

- There is exploding demand for local food; farmers find that they must set up waiting lists for their CSAs (community supported ag shares)
- 77% of state residents are more likely to buy farm products from Maryland farmers.<sup>1</sup>

1 – 2009 Survey by the U of Baltimore Schaefer Center for Public Policy







# Threats to the Ag Reserve



# Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve

Potomac River

Loudoun County,  
Virginia

Lansdowne



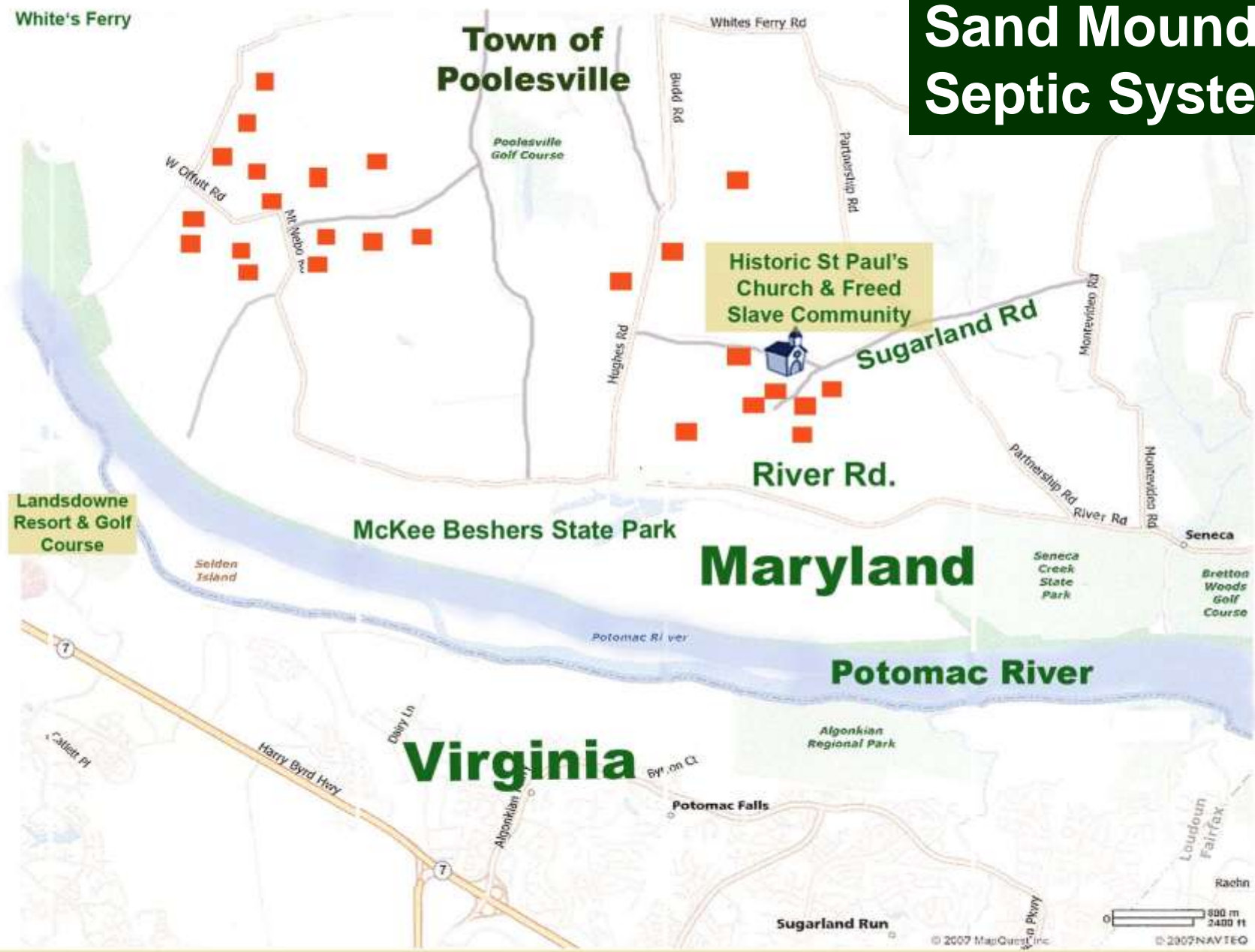




PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED RIVER CROSSINGS

- The proposed “Techway,” a 6-8 lane outer beltway would slice through the Ag Reserve, fragmenting farmland and promoting sprawl. It remains in Virginia’s long range transportation plan.

# Sand Mound Septic Systems



■ **25 Sand mounds approved/built south of Poolesville within a 3 mile radius since 1994.**





**St. Paul's  
Community Church,  
the Heart of  
Sugarland Forest  
Built by Freed Slaves**



**A typical residence near the Church**



In 2004, five estate lots with sand mound septics were approved just west of St. Paul's Church introducing McMansions to the community.

▲ This 13,000 sq.ft residence sold for \$2.3 million.





# Clustering



- This is not about farming. Over 50 acres removed from farming.
- Friction between “suburban mentality” and intended Ag uses. The only remaining working farm receives neighbor complaints.





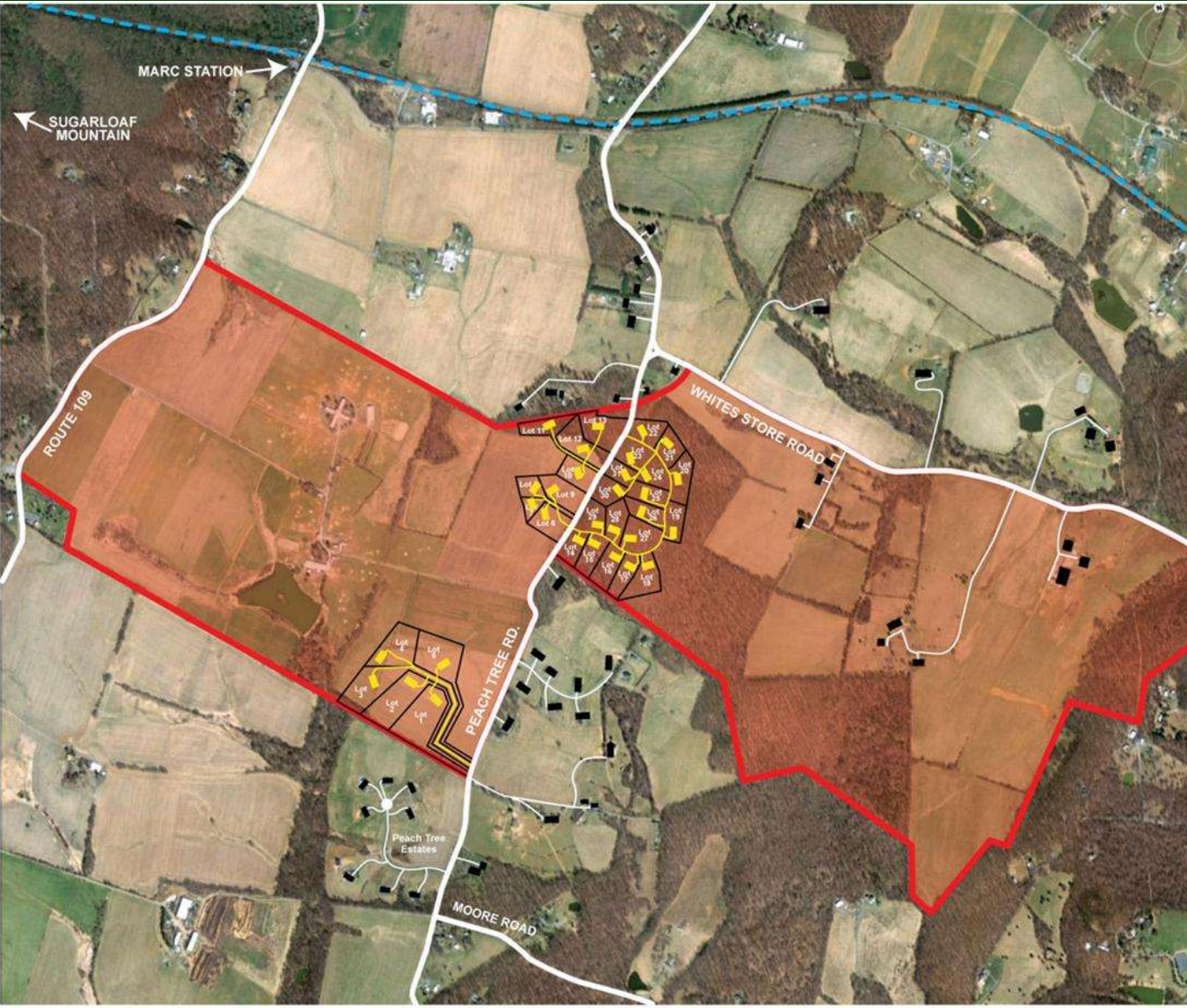
This 100 acre farm was subdivided into 4  $\pm$ 25 acre lots. The Nichols farm grows 1,700 lbs of organic tomatoes per week for Whole Foods.





Woody Woodroof's Red Wiggler Farm grows crops on 7 acres with a surrounding 8 acres for house, barn, road and buffer.





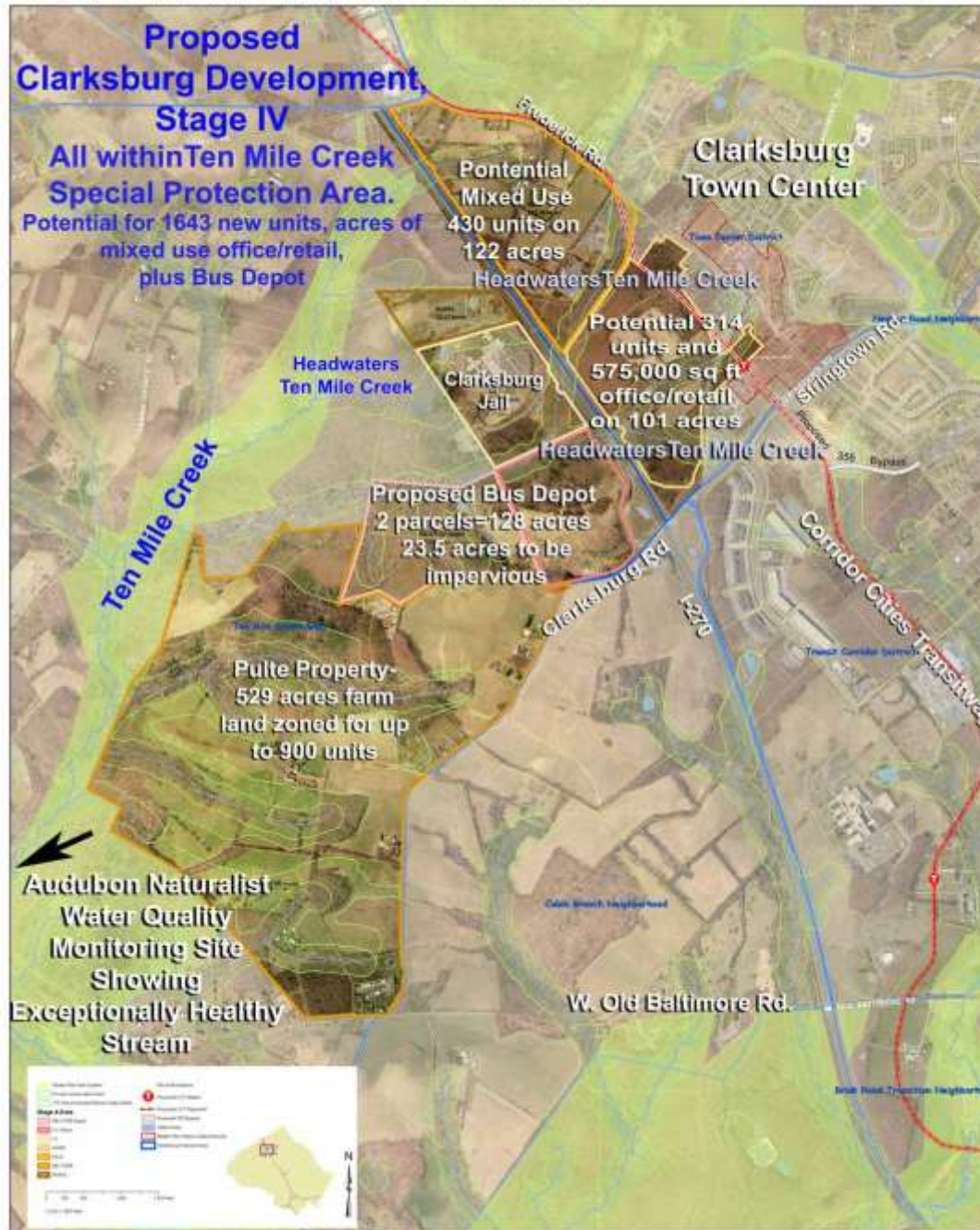
— Malsama Property Boundary (Now Barnesville Oaks)  
— Existing Roads ■ Existing Structures  
- - - Railroad ■ Proposed New Homes

**Barnesville Oak Farms Facts:**

- Largest farm over 800 acres left.
- This subdivision (26 units) will be larger than the existing town of Barnesville.



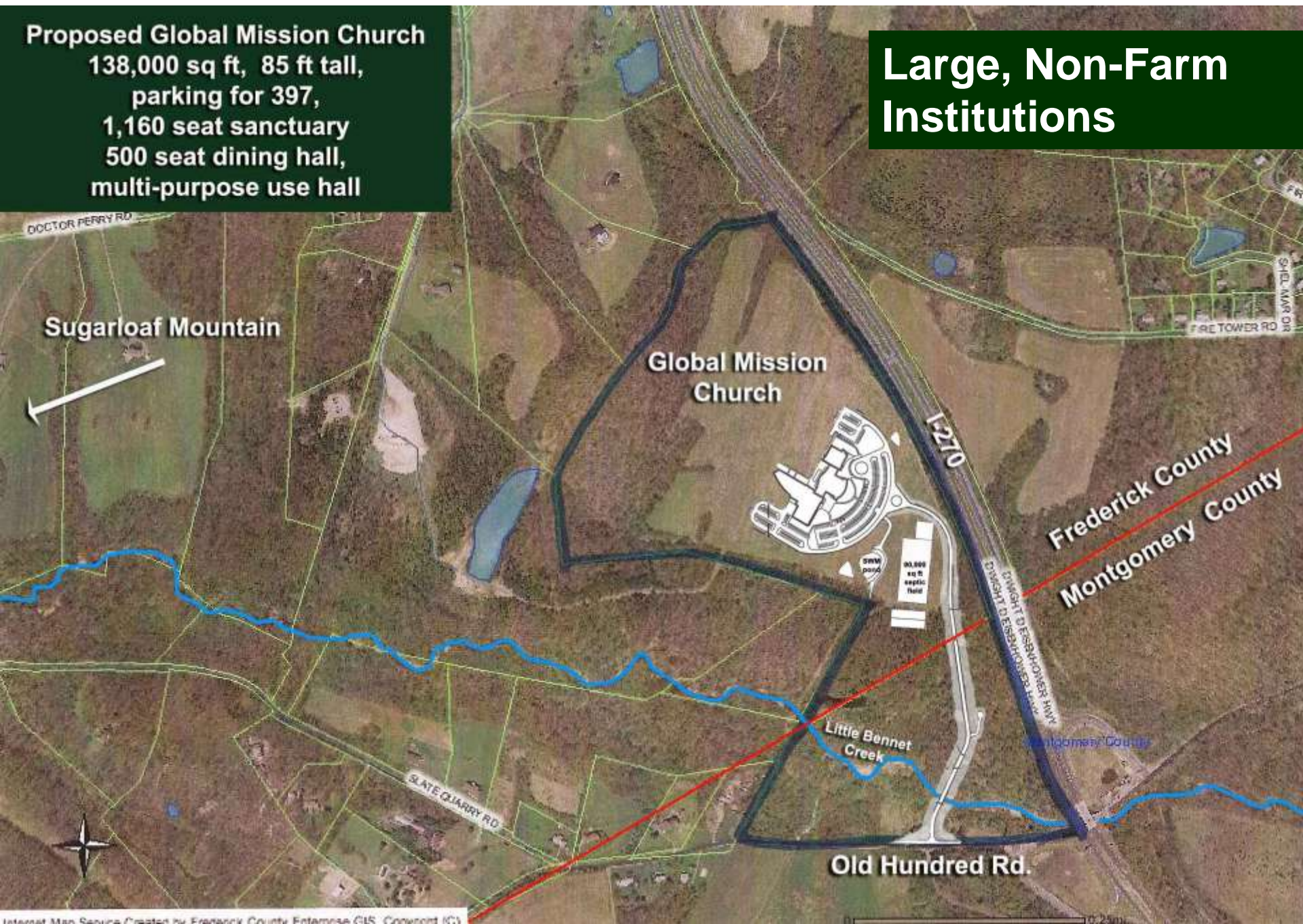
# Water Quality and Clarksburg Stage IV





**Proposed Global Mission Church**  
138,000 sq ft, 85 ft tall,  
parking for 397,  
1,160 seat sanctuary  
500 seat dining hall,  
multi-purpose use hall

**Large, Non-Farm  
Institutions**

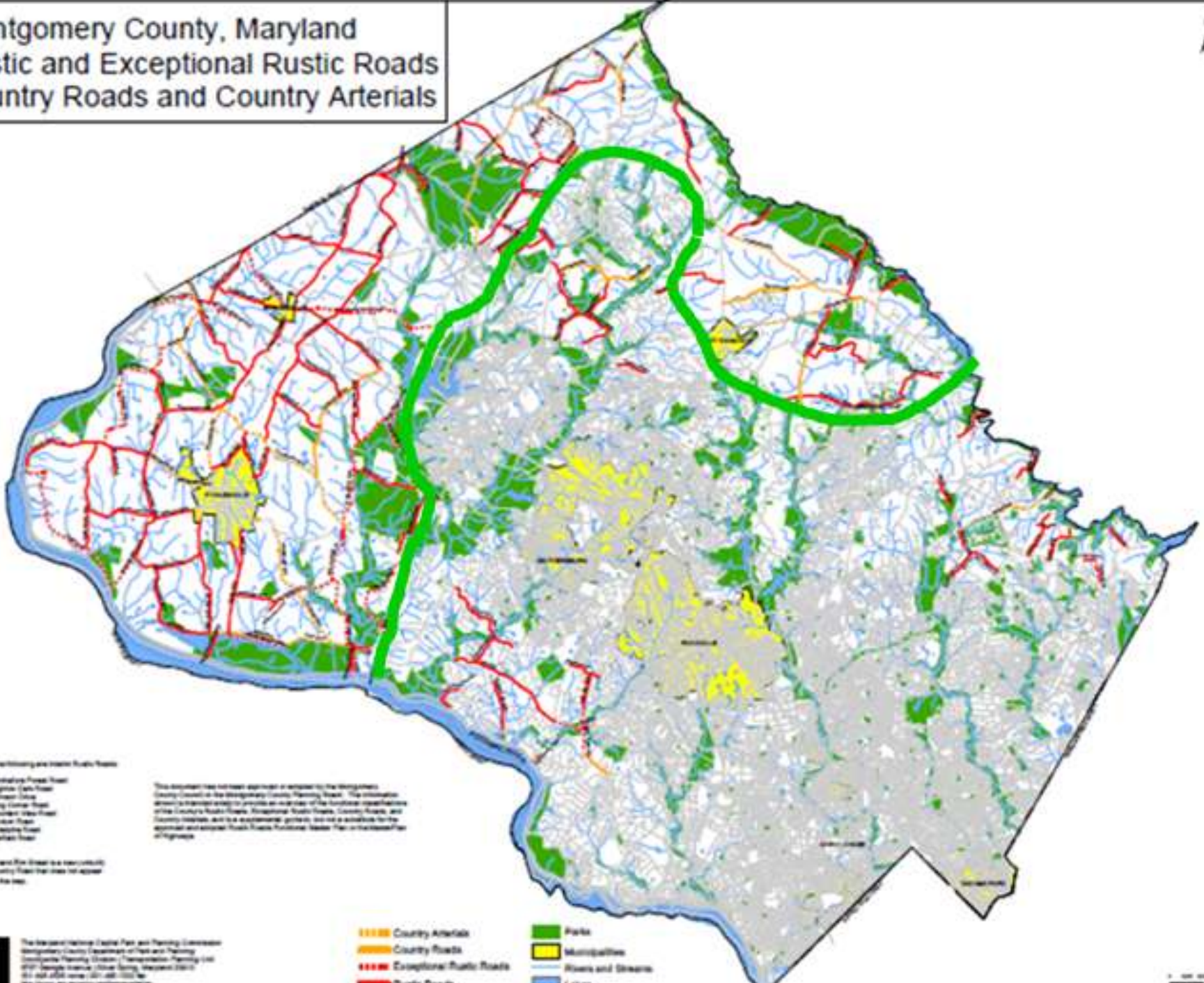




# Tools for Preservation and Next Steps



# Montgomery County, Maryland Rustic and Exceptional Rustic Roads Country Roads and Country Arterials



**Thickening and Rustic Road Types**

- Specialty Road
- Regionally Significant Road
- Long-Range Road
- Mountain Road
- Traverse Road
- Market Road

This document has not been approved or endorsed by the Montgomery County Council or the Montgomery County Planning Board. The information shown is intended solely to provide an overview of the functional classification of the County's Road Types, Exceptional Rustic Roads, Country Roads, and Country Arterials, and is a supplemental graphic, not a substitute for the approved and adopted Road Types Functional Classification or the Master Plan of Highways.

\*Roads that are not shown on this map are not shown on the map.

- ▬▬▬▬ Country Arterials
- ▬▬▬▬ Country Roads
- ▬▬▬▬ Exceptional Rustic Roads
- ▬▬▬▬ Rustic Roads
- ▬▬▬▬ Parks
- ▬▬▬▬ Municipalities
- ▬▬▬▬ Rivers and Streams
- ▬▬▬▬ Lakes



Resource  
Preservation



# Conservation Easements



- MALPF- Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation
- MET-Maryland Environmental Trust
- AEP- MoCo Ag Easement Program
- Rural Legacy- a state program of grants
- BLT- Building Lot Termination
- TDR- Transfer Development Rights
- Sugarloaf Countryside Conservancy- local land trust





## Our Park System

- Among the best in the nation.
- Makes up 30k acres of the Reserve
- We are fortunate to have County, State and Federal parks in our County.
- Park users are keenly interested in protecting open space for recreation opportunities.

# Promote the Production of Sustainable Local Food

- Keeping the “Ag” in the Ag Reserve.
- The demand for local food is massive- a way for downcounty to interact with the Reserve.
- Small Farms = Small Businesses- the engine of local economies, keep food dollars local.







# Need for Greater Public Awareness

More work needs to be done to educate about the Reserve





# For More Information

## Montgomery Countryside Alliance

[www.mocoalliance.org](http://www.mocoalliance.org)

[info@mocoalliance.org](mailto:info@mocoalliance.org)



## Audubon Naturalist Society

[www.anshome.org](http://www.anshome.org)

[Contact@audubonnaturalist.org](mailto:Contact@audubonnaturalist.org)



## Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission- MNCPPC

[www.mncppc.org/commission\\_home.html](http://www.mncppc.org/commission_home.html)

