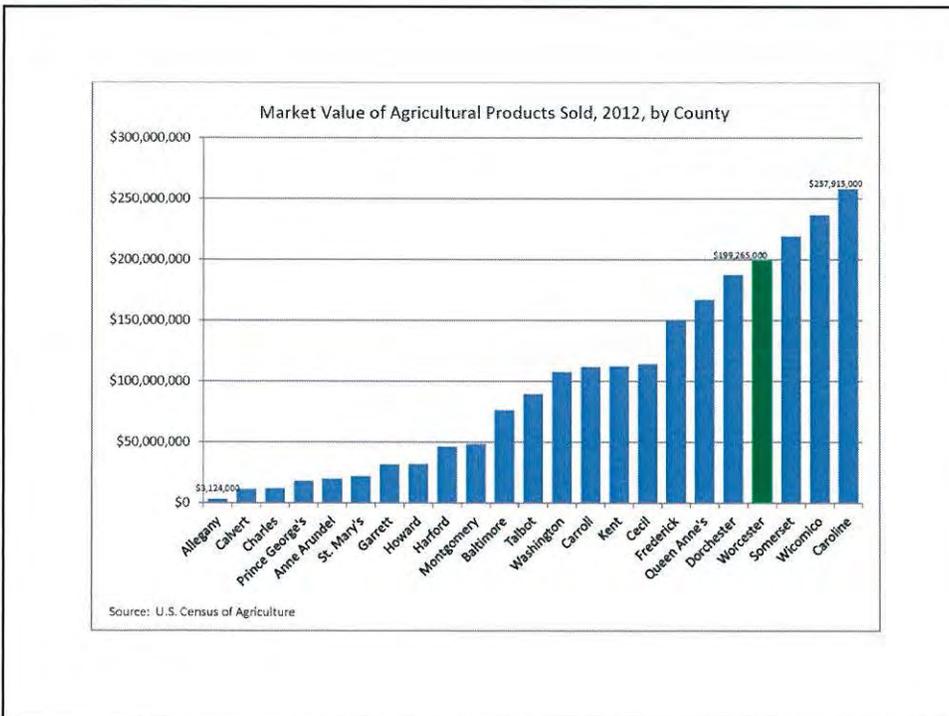


Why protect farmland in Worcester County?

- Prime farmland is a limited resource
- Agricultural activity is key to sustaining our local economy
- Tourism depends on lack of traffic congestion and a scenic countryside
- Sprawl development is not compatible with agricultural industries
- Farms, forest and other open land use less in local services than tax dollars paid (residential uses more)
- Protection of forest and implementation of conservation practices protects water quality
- Protection of cultural and historic resources



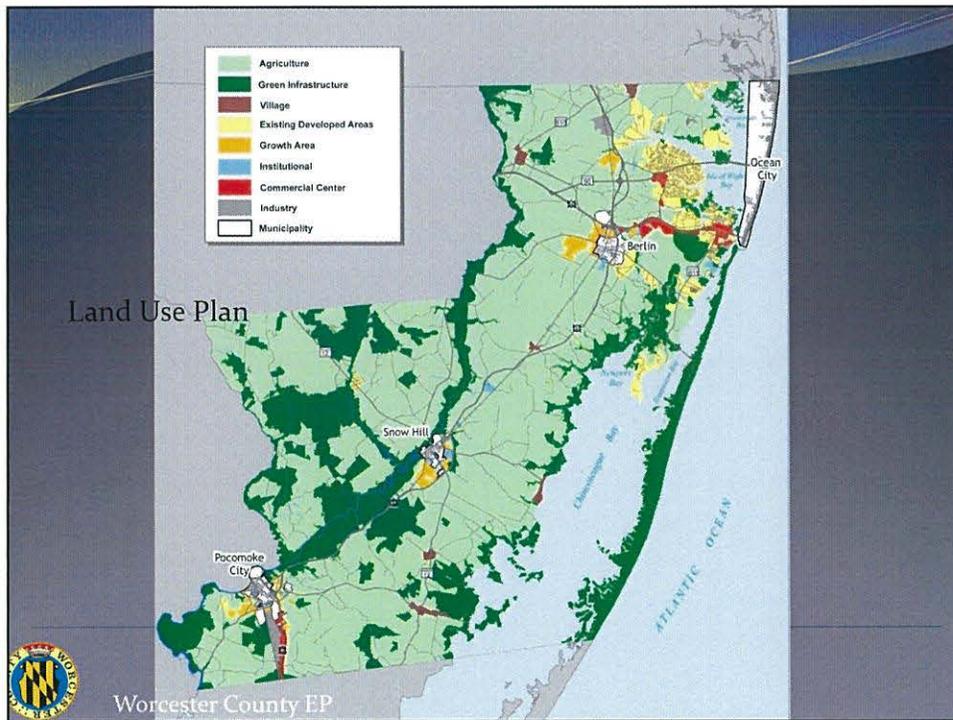
Worcester County EP

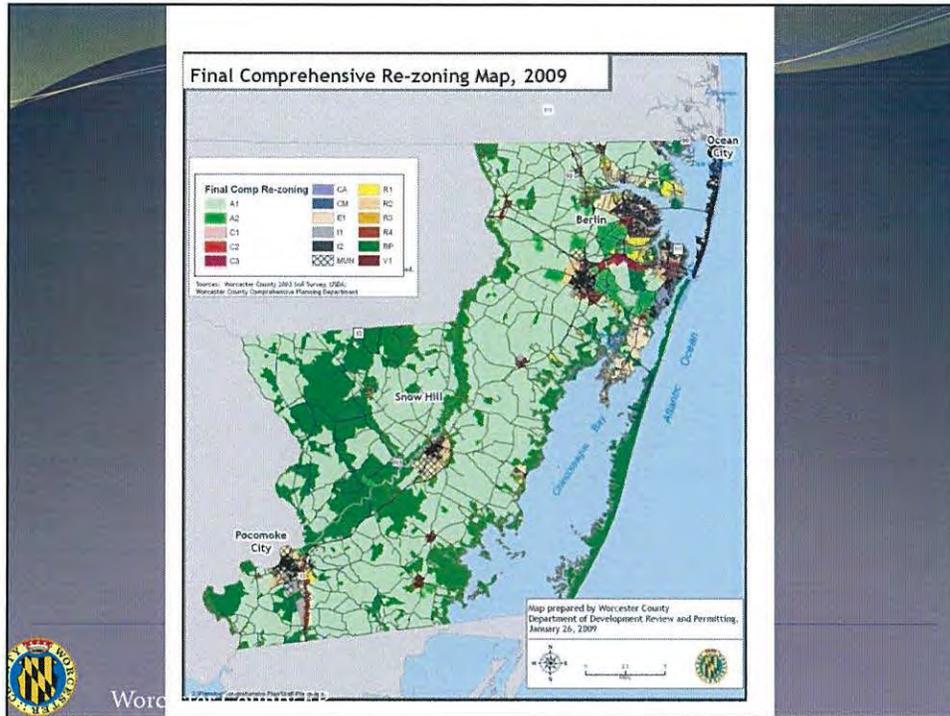


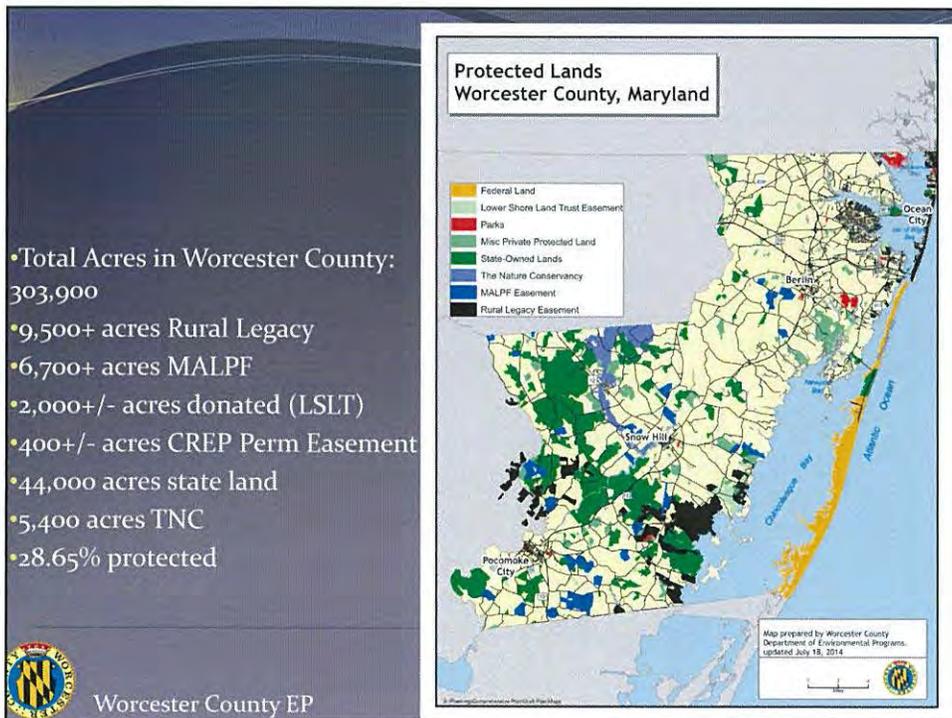
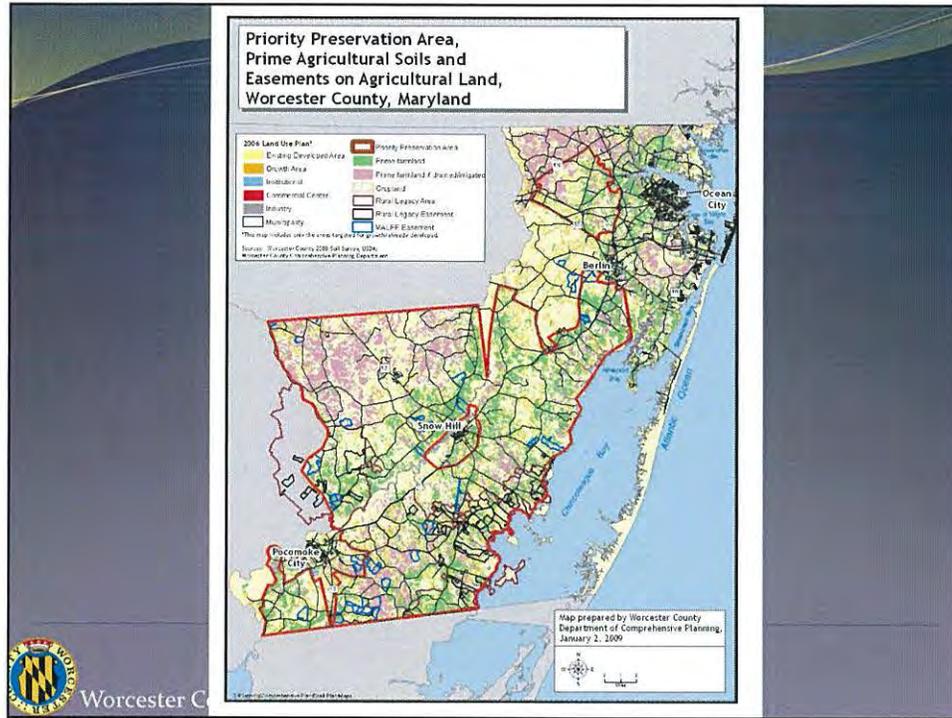
LSLT: Conserving Rural Heritage on MD's Lower Eastern Shore

<https://youtu.be/4cMFMVJw1ss>

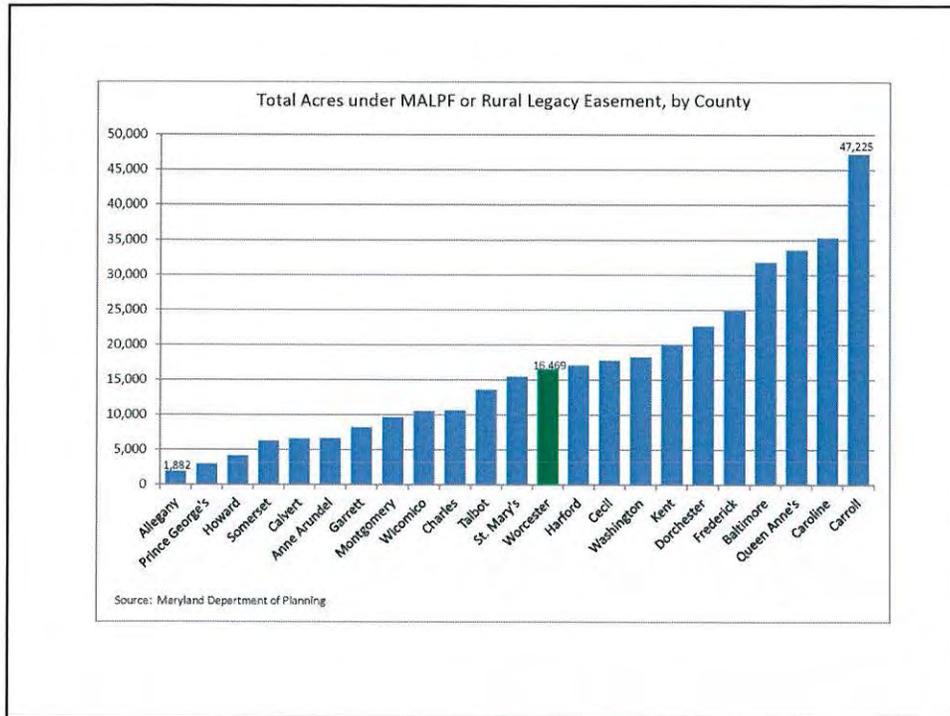
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- Total Acres in Worcester County: 303,900
- 9,500+ acres Rural Legacy
- 6,700+ acres MALPF
- 2,000+/- acres donated (LSLT)
- 400+/- acres CREP Perm Easement
- 44,000 acres state land
- 5,400 acres TNC
- 28.65% protected



Priority Areas

- Priority Preservation Area
- Coastal Bays Conservation Target Area
- Targeted Ecological Areas/BioNet (State priority)



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Coastal Bays Conservation Target Area

•Identified in 2009 by Worcester County and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program as a priority for resource land protection.

The 60,000+/- acres are key to maintaining water quality and habitat of Newport and Chincoteague Bay watersheds.

Significant overlap with TEA's/BIONET, builds on Coastal Bays RLA.

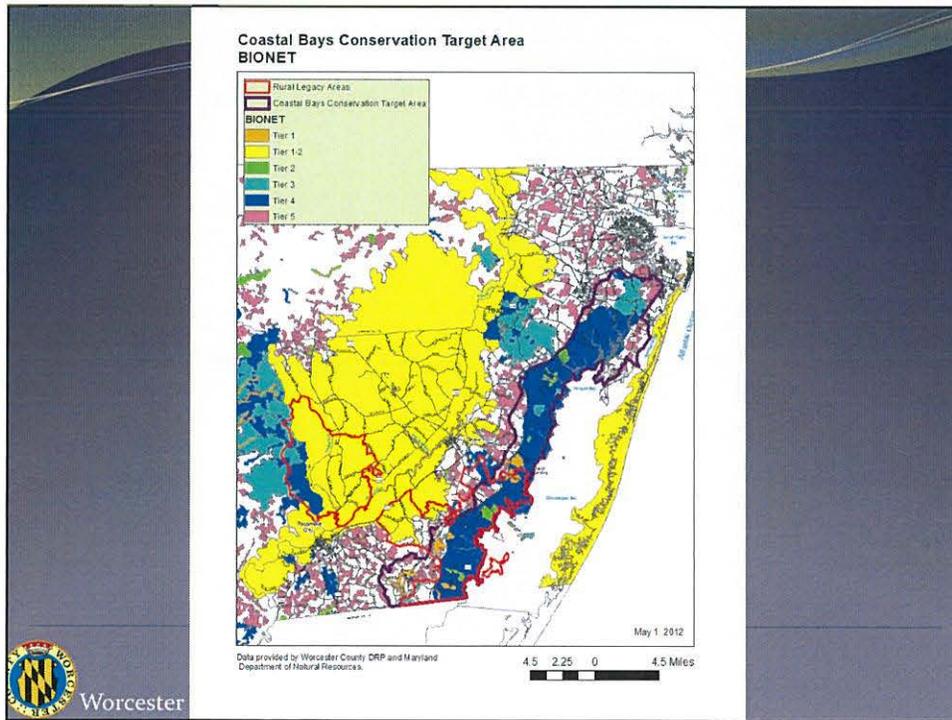
Contains 28 wetlands of "special state concern".

Goal to protect additional 3,300 acres by 2015 was reached (in 2014).

New Goal: 3,200 acres by 2020



Worcester County DRP



Land Protection Programs/Resources

Funded by State transfer tax:

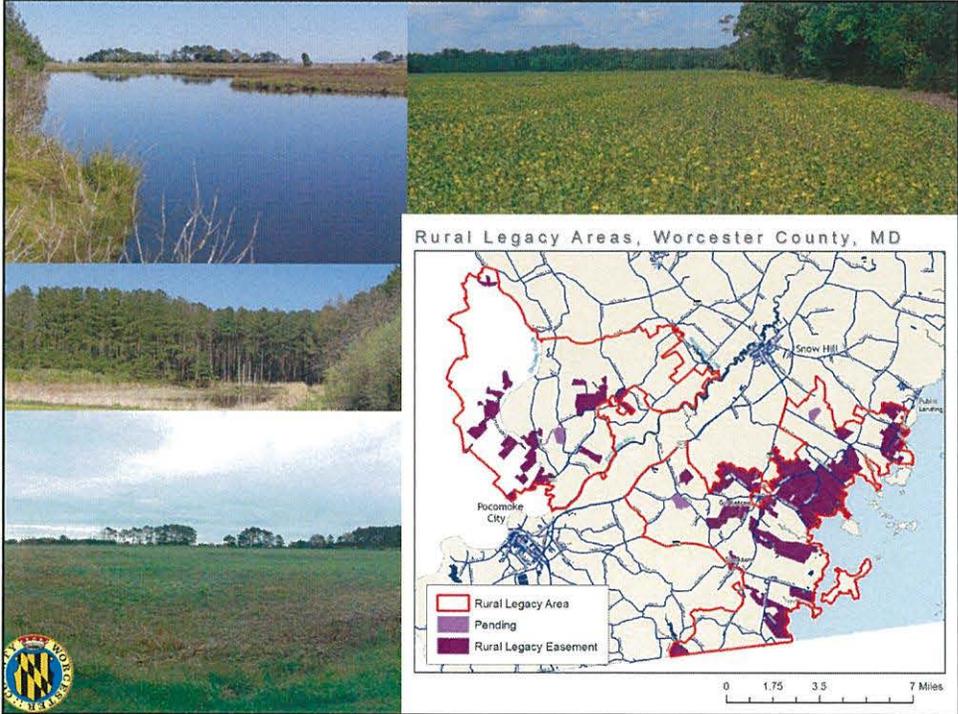
- Rural Legacy
- MALPF
- CREP Permanent Easement Program
- Program Open Space (POS)

• State-funded (MET)/Non-Profit (LSLT):
MET/Lower Shore Land-Trust donated easement program

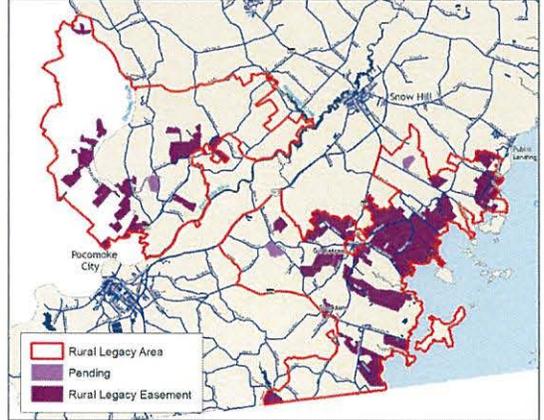
• Federal Funding:
Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) (now ACEP)
Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
USFWS Coastal Wetlands Grant Program



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Rural Legacy Areas, Worcester County, MD



- Rural Legacy Area
- Pending
- Rural Legacy Easement



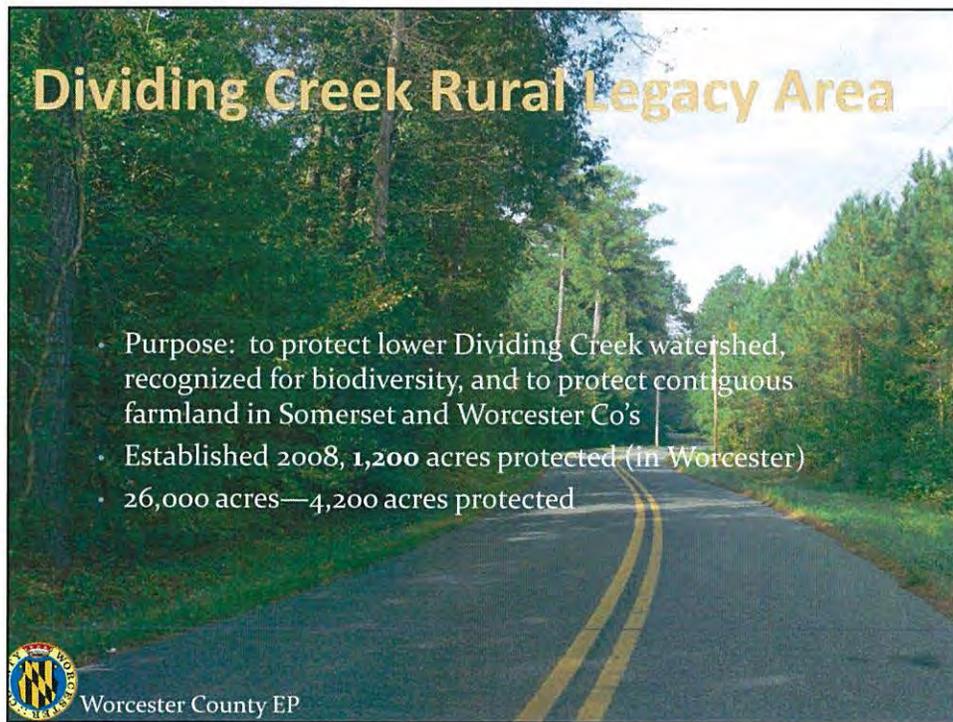
A landscape photograph showing a field of tall, dry grasses in the foreground, with a dense forest of trees in the background under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area

- Purpose: to build contiguous, permanent “greenway” that connects EA Vaughn WMA to Pocomoke Forest; protect natural resources in sensitive, pristine area
- Established 1998, 8,400 acres protected
- 26,000 acres—14,000 acres protected
- 8 miles of shoreline protected



Worcester County EP

A photograph of a paved road with double yellow lines curving through a lush green forest. The trees are tall and dense, creating a canopy overhead.

Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area

- Purpose: to protect lower Dividing Creek watershed, recognized for biodiversity, and to protect contiguous farmland in Somerset and Worcester Co's
- Established 2008, 1,200 acres protected (in Worcester)
- 26,000 acres—4,200 acres protected

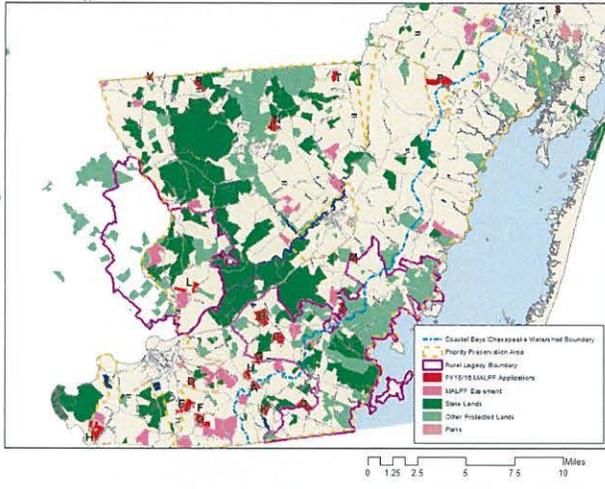


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MALPF

- 6,700+ acres
- Certified since 2004
- Over half of acreage protected since 2004
- 22 landowners owning 3,000+ acres interested
- 3 offers accepted by landowners in the FY15/16 cycle (selected based on ranking system)

FY15-16 MALPF Applications

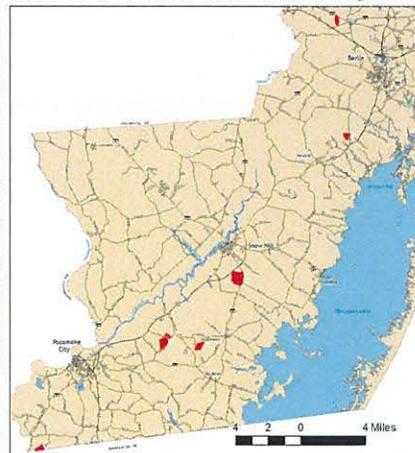


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CREP Permanent Easement Program

- Two rounds of funding have protected 425 acres/7 properties in Worcester Co.
- Purchases permanent easement on contract land + "matching" land

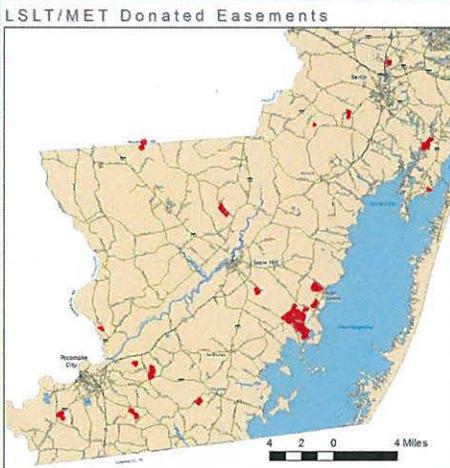
CREP Permanent Easement Program



Worcester County EP

LSLT/MET Donated Easements

- 1,000 acres +/-
- Opportunity to “match” donation with purchase



Worcester County EP

Land Protection Achievements

- From 1999 to 2014, 957 acres were protected annually, on average (15,327 acres)
- From 1999 to 2014, 645 new residential lots were created in the A-1 zone. This involved 4,258.2 acres

From 2012 to 2014, 757 acres were protected annually (2,270 acres)



Worcester County EP

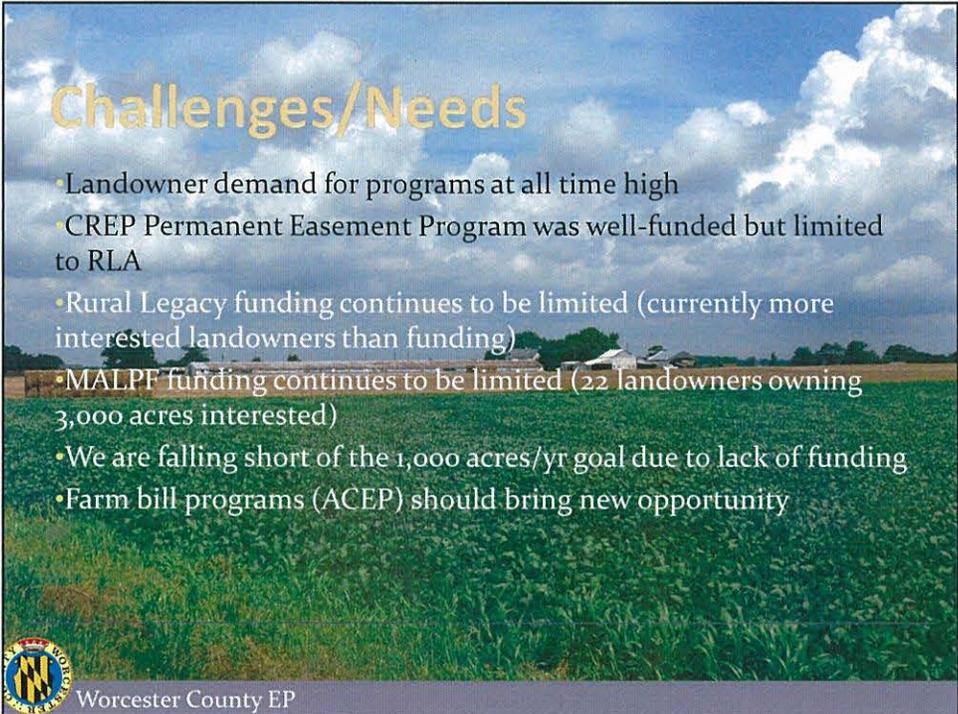


Matching Federal Funds

- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) now Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- USFWS Coastal Wetlands Grant Program



Worcester County EP



Challenges/Needs

- Landowner demand for programs at all time high
- CREP Permanent Easement Program was well-funded but limited to RLA
- Rural Legacy funding continues to be limited (currently more interested landowners than funding)
- MALPF funding continues to be limited (22 landowners owning 3,000 acres interested)
- We are falling short of the 1,000 acres/yr goal due to lack of funding
- Farm bill programs (ACEP) should bring new opportunity



Worcester County EP