

ABOVEBOARD

Aboveboard — I like the term. It's nautical and harkens to the days of sail when pirates would hide below deck to mask their true intent. Aboveboard has come to mean in plain view... not hiding anything. And that's how I intend to be with my communication; aboveboard. As Maryland's new natural resources secretary, I'm honored by the trust Governor Hogan has placed in me. I look forward to earning the trust of DNR employees and our citizens as we work together to restore, protect and conserve our natural and living resources.

When it comes to managing our natural public resources, I believe there are several fundamental components that will help ensure our success. Like the many and varied elements of an ecosystem, they exist independently, but work jointly to create a leadership and management philosophy that will help us all be successful.

Stewardship. First and foremost, we are stewards. We are not only charged with working on behalf of our resources and our citizens, we are also looked to for leadership in educating and inspiring all Marylanders to do the same. All of us at DNR strive to be outstanding stewards of the public trust — the people we serve expect and deserve nothing less.

Collaboration. Also paramount to our success are our partner organizations. The federal government, other states, legislators, local governments, non-profit organizations, industry and other stakeholders, comprise our natural resources enterprise. Cross sector coordination is a force-multiplier. And our partners work alongside us in every endeavor and are essential to our continued progress.

Diversity. If we only associate with like-minded people of backgrounds and interests similar to our own, we limit our creativity and are less likely to develop solutions to problems that will satisfy the many and varied constituencies that make up our great state of Maryland. We not only celebrate our differences; we embrace the expanded knowledge and creativity they bring to our work.

Sound Science. There are no political agendas or economic motives when it comes to science, which ultimately guides our actions in safeguarding our natural resources. Because we rely on sound science we are able to be transparent in our decision-making and build trust among all our customers and stakeholders. We must also be mindful of when we do and do not have sufficient science-based information to make decisions.

Flexibility. As the health of our environment, the needs of our citizens and the knowledge of our scientists and managers evolve, we are prepared to change with them. We are forward thinkers, adaptive and ready to deal with emerging issues, proactively when that is possible. We must be agile enough to address the issues that confront us.

I am confident our commitment to these ideals — our commitment to collective conservation — will allow us to successfully manage these public assets and pass them along to future generations safer, healthier and more sustainable.




Mark J. Belton
Secretary

Mark Belton was appointed Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources by Governor Larry Hogan earlier this year. From 2003 to 2005, he served as assistant secretary of DNR, overseeing the Natural Resources Police and the agency's mission support functions. A 1983 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Secretary Belton retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral in 2014.