



Governor's Commission for Protecting the Chesapeake Bay through Sustainable Forestry

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Maryland's Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need Revised October, 2006 Executive Summary

Acknowledging that forests are the best land use for water quality restoration, it is imperative to deal with the undeniable fact that the Chesapeake Bay watershed is losing 100 acres of forest every day. In Maryland 7,000 acres of forests are converted to non-forested uses annually. In keeping with Maryland's commitment to garner additional federal support to preserve important working forest landscapes that improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the Governor's Commission for Protecting the Chesapeake Bay through Sustainable Forestry has revised the Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need (AON).

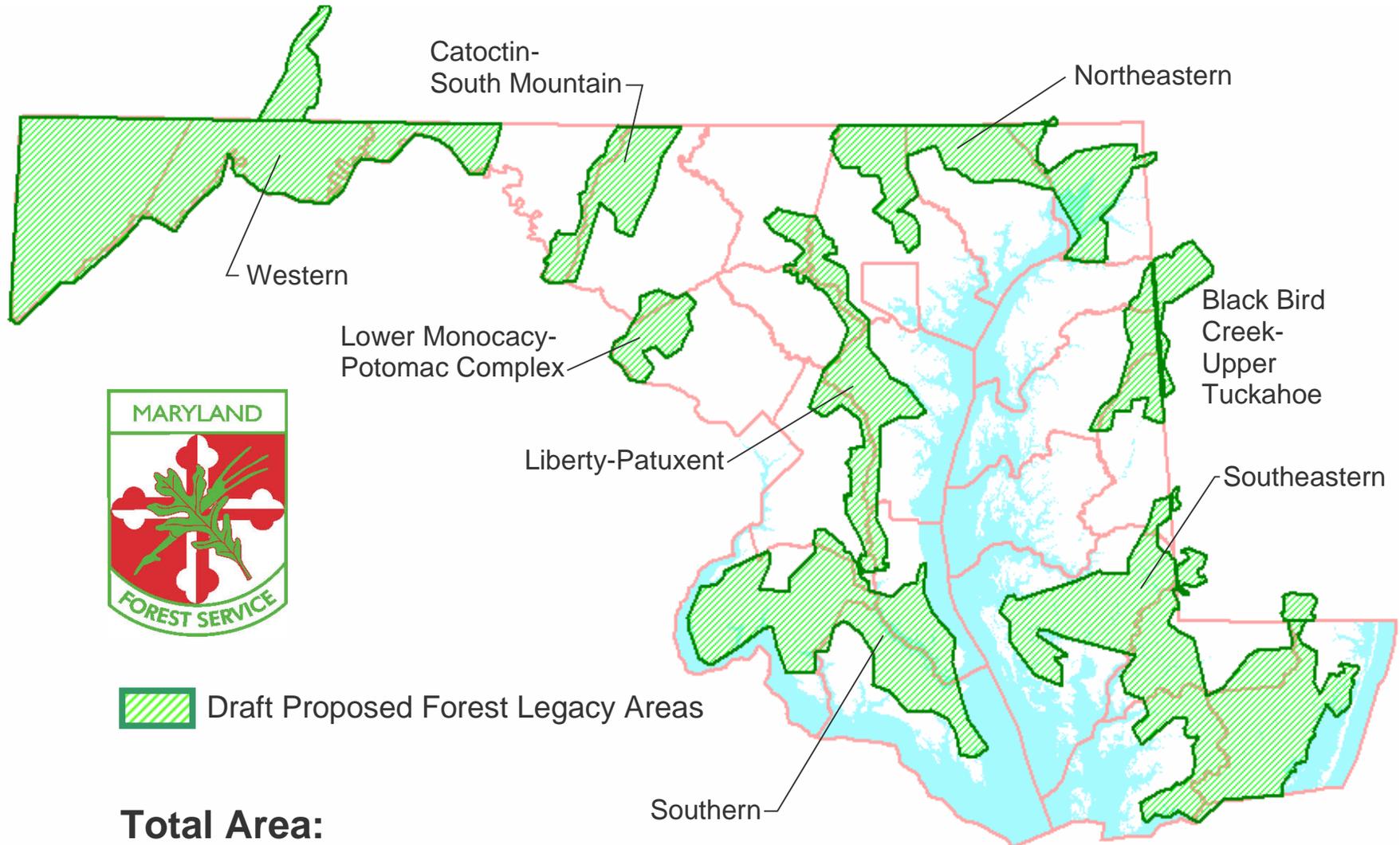
This draft AON map identifies environmentally important forestlands that are threatened by present or future conversion to non-forest uses. With the concurrence of the Governor, it will be distributed to local planning and zoning departments and posted on the DNR – Forest Service website for public review and comment. The proposed Forest Legacy Areas boundaries are expected to change as a result of this public participation process.

Utilizing sound science, three Geographical Information System assessments were initially used; the Strategic Forest Lands Assessment (SFLA) ecological, economic and vulnerability models. The ecological model evaluates the ecological values important to land conservation programs. The economic model evaluates the potential of forest land to yield economic benefits associated with timber management activities. The vulnerability model assesses the likelihood of a given acre of forest to development as well as factors that make its conversion less probable. The combined results of this effort were then matched with the Forest Stewardship Spatial Analysis Project (SAP) which evaluates the potential benefits and suitability of private owned forest land for the Forest Stewardship Program. Finally, the areas were related to other programs and objectives, including: Maryland's Green Infrastructure, 1995 Forest Legacy Areas, Rural Legacy Areas, existing protected lands, forest matrix blocks, and sensitive species areas.

The end result provides a rigorous, scientifically defensible approach for delineating Forest Legacy Areas and evaluating potential properties while improving Maryland's ability to better compete at a national level for funding.



Draft Proposed Forest Legacy Areas



Total Area:
4,650 sq miles = 48% land
area