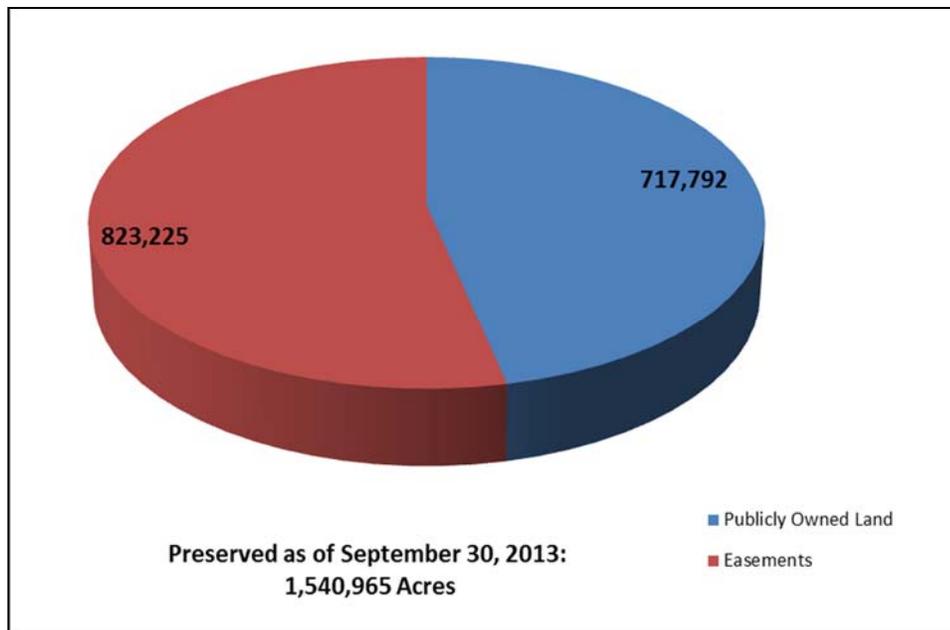


- Maintaining the delicate balance between providing for the demand for outdoor recreation, environmental, and cultural conservation, and stimulating economic growth
- Update the inventory of DNR land and water based properties and assess the existing supply and demand for outdoor recreation opportunities
- Evaluate outdoor recreation trends, deficiencies, under-served areas, and desired improvements
- Establish priorities based on outreach efforts, data research, and previous plans
- Measuring success using publicly issued annual benchmark reports

## E. Value of Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resource Protection

Maryland DNR has the distinction of serving as steward of the largest land holdings in Maryland. According to the *2013 DNR Owned Lands Acreage Report*, the DNR manages more than 475,839 acres. Considering all land under easement and public ownership, the total amount of preserved land in Maryland is over 1.5 million acres. The distribution of these DNR lands includes 25 percent that is designated as state parks, 50 percent dedicated to forests, and 25 percent comprising wildlife management areas. **Figure 2** illustrates the total amount of land protected in the State of Maryland.

**Figure 2: Total Land Protected Acreage by Easement and Public Ownership**



Source: Maryland Department of Planning

Outdoor recreation in Maryland is a vital contributor to local, regional, and state economies, as well as natural and cultural resource conservation efforts. Access to the outdoors contributes to individual, physical, and mental well-being and creates future land stewards. The DNR has been a national leader in land conservation for more than 40 years. This legacy, along with effective partnerships with friends and user groups, advocacy organizations, intergovernmental agencies, and other stakeholders, ensures the continued success of its land preservation and recreation initiatives.