

Summary

Our forest resources are for everyone. Whether located on public or private land it is imperative that we care for and manage them. As the guardians of this public trust, it is our responsibility to conserve these resources. Together, through our combined efforts in managing and protecting these resources, we will insure they will be viable for many generations to come.

For More Information Contact:

The Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) at (410) 313-2350, or come to the DPZ public service desk on the first floor of the Ascend One Building, 8930 Stanford Blvd., Columbia, MD 21045.

The office hours are: Monday through Friday; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Educational Guide For Forest Conservation Areas Located Within Public Easements or HOA or County Owned Open Space or Preservation Parcels

HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

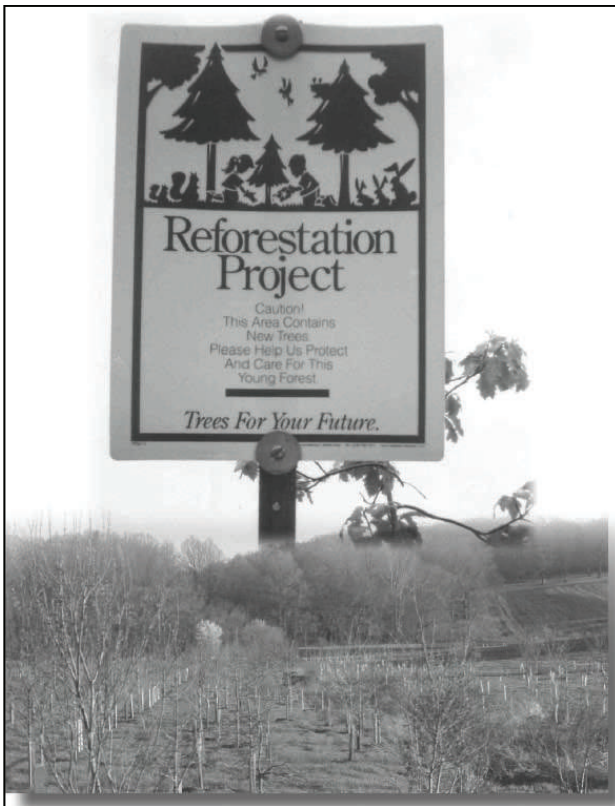


Your County Government Working For You.

Tel: (410) 313-2350

Introduction

Howard County's Forest Conservation Program was enacted pursuant to the requirements of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991. This law requires local governments to be the guardian of the public trust in protecting and maintaining forest resources. That is why subdivision and land development projects are required to have an approved Forest Conservation Plan as a condition of approval for development. The goal of the program is to protect and preserve trees and other natural vegetation in Howard County by promoting environmentally sensitive design. Additionally, this program promotes the creation of forests in areas where forests do not currently exist or cannot be saved. This brochure outlines our goal of partnering with you and your neighbors to guard the public trust in protecting and maintaining forest resources.



Things You Should Know

The occupants of a new development, whether owners or tenants, must avoid activities that destroy or degrade protected forest resources that have been placed under a public forest conservation easement. The post-construction protection program must therefore include steps to educate the new occupants about the proper use of Forest Conservation Easement areas, about the need for the developer and their designee to carry out the post-construction protection program, the type and duration of the post-construction protection activities, and the eventual transfer of long-term responsibilities to the owners or occupants. Information conveyed to the new occupants should include the following:

- Copies of the Forest Conservation Plan or plat, identifying all Forest Conservation Easement areas on the site.
- Letters or other written material explaining the developer's obligation for post-construction management, any rights of access needed to perform such duties, and a statement citing when new owners of the property or their common legal representative (for example, a homeowners association) will assume full responsibility for the Forest Conservation Easement areas. This material should also include the list of permitted and prohibited activities within Forest Conservation Easement areas cited in the Deed of Forest Conservation Easement.
- Signs posted on the property to delineate the Forest Conservation Easement areas.
- Other methods chosen by the developer.

HOA or County Owned Open Space or Preservation Parcels

Certain activities within the forest conservation easement areas located on HOA or County owned Open Space or Preservation Parcels are illegal. Some common violations include clearing, composting, dumping of soil, lawn clippings, trash, waste, abandoned vehicles and appliances, mowing, building structures such as sheds, pools, and fences, formal landscapes and all-terrain vehicle use. Forest conservation easements are not for these types of uses and will result in the ultimate destruction of the forest ecological system.

Permitted uses within a recorded forest conservation easement located on HOA or County owned Open Space or Preservation Parcels are walking, hiking, & bird watching.

You can help us protect these valuable forest resources by letting us know if you see any non-permitted structures, uses, or disturbances within a forest conservation easement area. Please contact the Department of Recreation and Parks, Natural Resources Division at 410-313-4725 to report any non-permitted structures, uses, or disturbances. The Department of Recreation and Parks, Natural Resources Division is responsible for following up on violations against forest conservation easements. Natural Resources enforcement staff will investigate and determine the course of action needed. All violations require restoration of the area and may include fines and/or court action.